



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THIRD GENERATION GANGS REVISTED: THE IRAQ  
INSURGENCY**

by

Nicholas I. Haussler

September 2005

Thesis Co-Advisors:

James Russell  
Anne Marie Baylouny

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**THIRD GENERATON GANGS REVISITED: THE IRAQ INSURGENCY**

Nicholas I. Haussler  
Second Lieutenant, United States Air Force  
B.S., United States Air Force Academy, 2004

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September 2005**

Author: Nicholas Haussler

Approved by: James Russell  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Anne Marie Baylouny  
Thesis Co-Advisor

Douglas Porch  
Chairman, Department of National Security Affairs

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## **ABSTRACT**

The insurgency in Iraq has continued despite the determination of U.S. and Iraqi forces. U.S. counter-insurgent strategy has operated from the premise that the main thrust behind anti-U.S. activities is a combination of Sunnis desiring a return to their former privileged position and tribal collective actors with long-standing grievances fuelled by radical Islam. Yet an analysis incorporating insights from gang theory illuminates the diverse, practical, and local motivations of those involved in insurgent networks. Gang theory is uniquely suited to illuminate the street-level dynamics that drive insurgent violence. Through this, a more precise picture of the relevant networks and their operative motivations can be drawn, allowing finer tuned policies targeted to the differentiated factors behind non-state violence. I first consider the origins of and interactions between the armed groups operating in Iraq for discernable trends in development, paying particular attention to factors consistent with gang models. I then alter the gang model for the context of Iraq, and present an integrated model that articulates the likely effects of state-insurgent interaction on stability and security there. I conclude with recommendations demonstrating the model's relevance for strategic use in other regions.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.	Insurgency and Gang Models .....	2
2.	Methodology .....	4
<b>B.</b>	<b>INSURGENCY AND GANG THEORY.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.	Industrial-Age Insurgency Theory .....	7
2.	Information-Age Insurgency Theory .....	13
3.	The Third-Generation Gang Model .....	19
4.	Gang Theory.....	23
a.	<i>Street-Level Mobilization</i> .....	24
b.	<i>Competition and Truce-Making</i> .....	27
<b>C.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>PLAN OF THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>CASE STUDY OF THE IRAQ INSURGENCY .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>STRUCTURAL CONDITONS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
1.	The Role of Informal Networks in State Development.....	34
2.	Resource Distribution and Scarcity .....	38
3.	After the U.S. Invasion: Informal Networks and Resource Scarcity.....	40
<b>C.</b>	<b>POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES.....</b>	<b>41</b>
1.	Phase One: March 2003-December 2003.....	42
2.	Phase Two: December 2003-January 2005.....	44
3.	Phase Three: January 2005-Summer 2005.....	47
<b>D.</b>	<b>MOBILIZATION STRUCTURES.....</b>	<b>49</b>
1.	Organizational Form .....	49
2.	External Connectivity .....	54
<b>E.</b>	<b>THE DYNAMICS OF COMPETITON.....</b>	<b>57</b>
1.	Parameters of Competition and the Role of Coalition Forces in Phase Three .....	59
2.	The Effects of Competition: Intra-Insurgency Relations and Effects on Violence.....	62
<b>F.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>RETHINKING URBAN INSURGENCY: THE MODIFIED THIRD-GENERATION GANG MODEL .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>MODIFICATIONS TO THE 3G2 MODEL.....</b>	<b>70</b>
1.	Structural Conditions .....	70
2.	Political Opportunities.....	70

3.	Mobilization Structures.....	71
C.	INPUTS AND EFFECTS .....	76
1.	The Modified 3G2 Framework: Inputs to Reduce Insurgent Violence.....	76
2.	Expected Outcomes of Observed Trends.....	80
D.	APPLICABILITY OF THE 3G2 FRAMEWORK IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM .....	84
1.	Bounding the GWOT.....	84
2.	Structure of the GWOT Threat Environment and the Applicability of the Model.....	86
E.	CONCLUSIONS .....	88
IV.	CONCLUSION .....	89
A.	INTRODUCTION.....	89
B.	LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT AND URBAN INSURGENCY IN THE INFORMATION AGE.....	89
C.	LESSONS FROM THE IRAQ CASE FINDINGS .....	91
D.	MODIFICATIONS TO THE GANG MODEL.....	94
E.	ASSESSMENT OF HYPOTHESES .....	97
F.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	99
G.	AREAS FOR FURTHER INQUIRY .....	103
	LIST OF REFERENCES .....	105
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	113

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Spectrum of Conflict. (After Army FM 7-85, 1-2 and <i>Army Vision 2010</i> (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, November 1996), 5. ....	6
Figure 2.	Evolving Characteristics of Street-gangs (From John Sullivan, “Gangs, Hooligans, and Anarchists- the Vanguard of Netwar in the Streets,” in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds. <i>Networks and Netwars The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy</i> (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 103.) .....	21
Figure 3.	Third Generation Gang Model vs. Integrated Model.....	95
Figure 4.	Third Generation Gang Model.....	96
Figure 5.	Integrated Third Generation Gang Model.....	96

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# **I. INTRODUCTION, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

In the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, The United States is confronting an international system characterized by new threats and uncertainties. The security posture of strategic offense adopted in response guarantees a substantial role for military force within this emerging threat environment. Military planners must contend with an evolving asymmetrical landscape that differs markedly from the traditional Cold-War era paradigm. The danger posed by conventional armies has now been overshadowed by the destructive potential of non-traditional actors, a spectre realized in Indonesia, Tunisia, Morocco, Madrid, London and Egypt. The perpetrators of these and other attacks represent new types of non-state actors that appear in a variety of contexts and in increasing numbers. Revolutionary advances in technology are permitting non-state forces ranging from computer hackers to terrorist groups and urban gangs to challenge the security and sovereignty of modern states. Technology allows these groups to exercise disproportionate levels of influence and to pursue objectives that would have been unthinkable in previous decades.

The challenges posed by these violent actors are indicative of the changing parameters of warfare. U.S. troops must be prepared to counter these emerging forces even as the conventional distinctions between the battlefield and the broader environment are becoming blurred. Traditional relationships between combatants, civilian populations, and the state are changing in ways that reflect the new unconventional realities of conflict. Nowhere is this transformation more apparent than in the ongoing insurgency in Iraq. At present, U.S. forces are facing a complex array of interconnected groups from across the spectrum of violent actors. Indigenous groups, transnational organizations, and a multitude of intermediaries extend the effects of this conflict from the street to the global level. Many of these groups are exploiting advanced technology to mobilize and sustain operations. New capabilities are augmenting resistance to efforts aimed at identifying, targeting, and containing insurgent activities. In spite of the determination of U.S. troops and Iraqi forces, insurgent capabilities continue to rise.

## **1. Insurgency and Gang Models**

In order to decipher the trajectory and incentives of the Iraqi insurgency, this study addresses two main questions. First, how should the insurgency in Iraq be re-conceptualized in order to better manage insurgent violence in the near term, and to further suggest potential evolutionary trajectories for the conflict? At present, our grasp of the mechanisms driving insurgent behavior is tenuous at best. Here I seek to develop a model that clarifies the factions and loyalties comprising the insurgency, how they relate to coalition forces and to the Iraqi state.

Second, is there a useful conceptual tool for ongoing and potential future engagements in the GWOT threat environment? Although operations within Iraq are framed as a fundamental aspect of the GWOT, this question relates to the broader context of the objectives and end-state of this global campaign. This study seeks to identify the crucial strategic components of this environment and the ways in which they interact.

To address both questions, I examine the developing third generation gang (3G2) model introduced by John Sullivan.<sup>1</sup> This concept builds on the theory of netwar proposed by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt.<sup>2</sup> Netwar theory posits that the information revolution has favored networked forms of organization, and that advances in communications technology play a larger role in shaping the character and outcomes of conflict. Actors adopt more diffuse and dispersed characteristics that give them certain advantages in a conflict environment. The 3G2 model stems from the observation that urban gangs are well situated to embrace the characteristics of netwar actors. Advanced urban gangs capitalize on technological advantages in communications, organization, and weaponry to challenge the security and stability of modern states. I test the utility of the 3G2 model in the present context by comparing the model to the Sunni-led insurgency in Iraq. The findings of this comparison are used to build an integrated model, adapting the model with innovations for the insurgent context that is presented in Chapter IV.

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1 See John P. Sullivan, "Third Generation Street Gangs: Turf, Cartels and Netwarriors," *Crime and Justice International*, 13, No. 10, November 1997 and John P. Sullivan "Urban Gangs Evolving as Criminal Netwar Actors," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 11, No. 1, Spring 2000.

2 See John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, "Cyberwar is Coming!" *Comparative Strategy*, 12, No. 2, 1993.



This model is used to test two main hypotheses: that an adapted version of the 3G2 framework is a more realistic way to conceptualize the Sunni-led insurgency than the general guidelines currently in use; and that the 3G2 model is a functional representation of the evolving GWOT environment, and is a helpful conceptual tool for strategic planners. These hypotheses re-frame the rationale guiding U.S. military encounters in both Iraq and the secondary theatres of the GWOT. They challenge the current employment of U.S. forces and accepted notions of how and why insurgent groups mobilize and fight. In the case of Iraq, the existing parameters of U.S. military engagement are informed by an incomplete appraisal of the essential factors that are shaping the conflict environment. Explanations for insurgent activity have yet to account for the societal constructs driving group behavior, offering instead the perception of an insurgency that is being perpetuated by a discrete collection of actors harboring restorationist ambitions or primordial tribal grievances. Abstracting motives and interpreting group behavior through such an outlook omits important attributes that are useful for discerning trends in the development of insurgent groups. The economic, political, and social relationships propelling interactions between insurgent groups, local populations, and the state are left aside, making current assessments of insurgent capabilities and probable trajectories of evolution partial and inadequate.

In contrast to theories favoring tribal grievances and Sunni intransigence, I show that the dynamics of the insurgency demonstrate that a complex process of competitive interaction is structuring the threat environment in meaningful ways. Far from being driven by al Qaeda or uniform anti-Americanism, much of the insurgency has little if anything to do directly with the U.S. Relationships between and among indigenous and foreign insurgent actors have been conditioned by this competitive calculus. Insurgent campaigns have so far revealed shifting patterns of allegiance and loyalties between violent groups that are informed by a strategic rationale superseding supposed tribal and ideological bonds. These results differ from current assumptions, which expect that violent groups with shared ethnic, ideological, or programmatic affinity will positively interact to erode the process of stability and reconstruction in Iraq. This process is only likely given certain specific conditions, and extrapolating the results of this limited set of

circumstances into broad strategic policy will yield negative outcomes, strengthening and perpetuating insurgent violence.

## **2. Methodology**

Case study analysis is the methodology used in this study. The primary case is the Sunni-led insurgency from the beginning of the U.S. invasion until the summer of 2005. This case offers the range of criteria needed to adequately test the 3G2 concept, the most important of which are: 1) sustained and organized street-level group violence, 2) the presence of transnational criminal and terrorist enterprises that seek to establish and maintain local street-level relationships, 3) competition among street-level actors, and 4) a central state vulnerable to destabilization by the evolving role of street-level groups. Sources for this study include criminological and sociological surveys of gang dynamics, studies of kinship and interpersonal networks within Iraqi society and government, relevant literature detailing the netwar concept and the 3G2 model, press accounts of insurgent-counterinsurgent interaction, and primary source accounts of insurgent-counterinsurgent interaction from the perspective of US counterinsurgency personnel.

In the rest of this chapter, I establish the parameters of modern low-intensity conflict and examine the history of insurgent-counterinsurgent interaction. Prominent cases are compared to show the changing characteristics of insurgency from after World War Two until the present. I introduce the analytical framework of the thesis and review the literature regarding netwar concepts and the 3G2 model. I also survey the literature concerning street-level gang dynamics and emphasize the role of violent competition. I articulate the theoretical foundation for street-level interaction which will be tested in the case study.

## **B. INSURGENCY AND GANG THEORY**

Whether termed an insurgency, rebellion, subversion or guerilla war, unconventional warfare has been the most common form of violent struggle during the twentieth century. The baseline of this spectrum of conflict is subversion, described by Kitson as any sustained measure short of armed force employed by one portion of the population to overthrow a sitting government, or to coerce a government to act against its

will.<sup>3</sup> Should one section of the population resort to the sustained use of force against its government in the pursuance of the above objectives, then the situation corresponds to the definition of insurgency used in this study. Rebellion describes both processes, but generally connotes a failed attempt at insurgency, while successful insurgencies are often described as “revolutionary.”<sup>4</sup> The terms guerilla, partisan, irregular, and paramilitary indicate politically nuanced variations of what in practice are combatants engaged in some type of unconventional struggle. In this study these terms are used interchangeably.

In cases where subversion is inadequate or unsuccessful, insurgency in the form of sabotage and terrorist violence will erupt, and if insurgent groups are permitted to become sufficiently well-armed and numerous (guerillas, irregulars, etc.), to the point of challenging the government in open combat and on comparable terms, the conflict has evolved into traditional civil war.<sup>5</sup> This stage represents the juncture of low and medium-intensity conflict, where regularized forces contend in open battle in conditions short of declared war. All varieties of conflict short of this threshold are considered low-intensity (see Figure 1). The high-end of this spectrum is a state of declared, general warfare. The thresholds defining each stage of escalation are vague to the point of imperceptibility, a characteristic compounded by the tendency of higher-order conflicts such as openly declared war to encompass successive dynamics from subversion onward. Because insurgency occupies the widest swath of the spectrum short of traditional warfare and enjoys the greatest overlap between successive stages of contention, insurgency has become the dominant form of violent conflict since the immediate aftermath of World War Two when Kitson offered the above formulation.

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3 Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (Harrisburg, Pa: Stackpole Books, 1971), 3.

4 Maria Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol* (Yale University Press, 1995), 8.

5 Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (Harrisburg, Pa: Stackpole Books, 1971), 5.

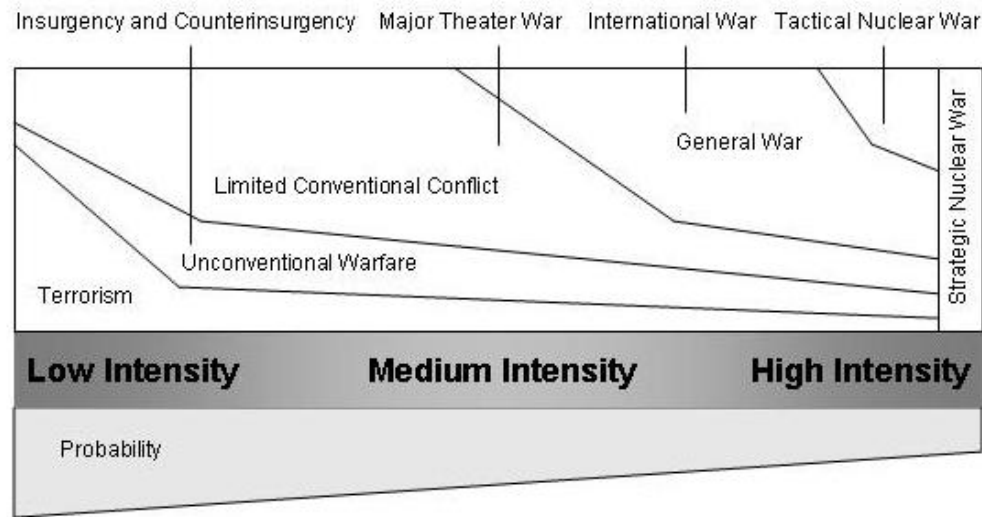


Figure 1. Spectrum of Conflict. (After Army FM 7-85, 1-2 and *Army Vision 2010* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, November 1996), 5.

As the nature of conventional warfare has evolved in the intervening fifty years, the characteristics of insurgency and counterinsurgency (COIN) have varied accordingly, yet contemporary perceptions of insurgency are only beginning to appreciate how the effects of the last half-century have altered insurgent behavior.

For the purpose of this study, a somewhat artificial dichotomy has been suggested, whereby insurgencies during the period conforming roughly to the Cold War are characterized as “industrial-age,” in order to differentiate between “information-age” conflicts discussed in later sections. This emphasis is primarily for analytic purposes, and is not intended to suggest that industrial-age insurgencies simply ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall, or that industrial-age insurgencies do not have qualities also found in other periods. In this chapter I first review the literature that details the development of industrial-age insurgency and COIN theory. I present the broad strategic themes guiding insurgent motivation, mobilization, and the methodology of state response prevalent during this period. The second section examines emerging theories of low-intensity conflict that describe the changing character of warfare and the role of sub-state actors in the information-age. The first segment reviews the development of netwar theory and introduces a framework for analysis informed by structural conditions, political opportunities, and mobilization structures. The second segment presents the third

generation gang (3G2) model that relates sub-state actors to netwar theory and identifies specific trajectories of evolution within an urban context. In the final section of the chapter I review relevant aspects of contemporary gang theory, with emphasis on mobilization mechanisms and the role of competition at the street-level.

### **1. Industrial-Age Insurgency Theory**

The characteristics of industrial-age insurgencies are well documented. Some general themes have been distinguished regarding the conditions in society and catalysts for insurgent behavior, insurgent mobilization, and state responses to insurgency that are worthy of review. The situations that persisted in the British and French colonial periphery as World War Two subsided are instructive, as the campaigns waged in Vietnam, Malaya, Kenya, Algeria, and Cyprus exemplify fundamental characteristics of industrial-age insurgency. First, these conflicts illustrate nationalist responses to the re-imposition of a colonial authority that had been weakened in relative terms by the war. Second, the political grievances expressed by a particular segment of the population, usually in the form of independence from colonial rule, surpassed the limits of what colonial governments were prepared to accommodate.<sup>6</sup> Metz and Millen note that these situations are characteristic of “liberation” insurgency, where insurgents contend against a ruling group that is perceived as a foreign occupation by virtue of culture, race, or ethnicity. In such cases, the strategy of insurgency has been embraced by majority segments of society in addition to marginalized minorities, and has taken the form of populist-nationalism as well as Maoist-Marxism.<sup>7</sup>

This distinction in the form of insurgency is notable in relation to insurgent mobilization and organization. Populist-nationalist movements require no coherent ideology or proposed political alternative to motivate a sustained inflow of recruits and resources as long as resentment of outside occupation and foreign interference is widespread.<sup>8</sup> While populist-nationalist movements commonly suggest far-right or fascist orientations, in practice this ideal type overlaps with Maoist-Marxism, the twentieth

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw, “Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict,” RAND Corporation (Santa Monica, CA, 1991), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response,” (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 24.

century's most widely employed variant of insurgent-based strategy. Indeed, the Maoist "People's War" seems particularly operative when framed by the nationalist rhetoric of a liberation insurgency.<sup>9</sup> The most definitive characteristic of a People's War is the triangular relationship describing the political and psychological competition between an insurgent minority, the government, and the undecided majority population. In this model, the undecided majority is the critical center of gravity. Both sides must capture this element in order to establish legitimacy and support.<sup>10</sup> The success of Maoist insurgency not only depends upon its practical ability to sustain operations and support, but also on its ability to transition into what Metz and Millen further characterize as "national" insurgency upon the defeat of foreign occupation.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, the principle antagonists are the insurgents and a national government with some degree of legitimacy and support, and the primary distinctions between the opposing factions are related to political factors such as ideology, economic class, and identity.<sup>12</sup> While national insurgencies mimic the triangular dynamics of People's War, a range of actors capable of altering the relationship between the antagonists replaces the undecided majority, and mobilization becomes correspondingly more difficult. Because the insurgents and government generally pursue strategies and tactics that "mirror image"<sup>13</sup> the other, the insurgents must fully develop and apply their political alternative within the areas wrested from state control and vigorously attempt to weaken the government by capturing popular support. This process was especially evident in Algeria and to a lesser extent in Cyprus, although national insurgencies became more prevalent in the late 1960s as colonialism declined.

Britain is most widely credited with the development of comparatively successful COIN doctrine, due largely to experience as a colonial power. The situations in British Malaya, Kenya, Oman and Cyprus in the 1950s demonstrated that the ambiguous and

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9 Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies* (London: Routledge, 2001), 70.

10 Ibid, 74.

11 Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 2.

12 Ibid, 3.

13 Ibid, 2.

protracted character of liberation insurgency drastically limited the range and effectiveness of state response, and that a government must adapt to rapidly evolving political and security dynamics in order to succeed.<sup>14</sup> In broad terms, Britain often confronted segments of a clearly defined minority group that attempted to control the population through violence within an ethnically divided society. Insurgents generally based their operations within the country rather than in neighboring territories, received little or no support from external sources, and waged the bulk of their campaigns away from cities.<sup>15</sup> Britain's "Small Wars" doctrine that guided counterinsurgency strategy during this period discounted the potential of violent activists to move very far beyond terrorism and low-intensity guerilla warfare, while acknowledging that sustained "harassment" <sup>16</sup> by insurgent forces might eventually result in strategic success, exemplified by events in Algeria. In order to prevent such an outcome, Britain employed a program of case-specific responses that advocated the early recognition of an organized insurgency, the training and equipping of indigenous forces, use of minimum-force in hostile engagements, concentration of administrative, police, and military authority, extensive resettlement programs, "hearts and minds" operations, the employment of Special Forces and small units where military force was required, and the development of long-term political incentives.<sup>17</sup>

While this manner of state response contributed to the unequivocal defeat of the insurgencies in Malaya and Kenya, the insurgency in Cyprus proved more difficult to contain, reduced at great length and cost to an "acceptable level of violence."<sup>18</sup> In many ways, the Cyprian case exemplified future trends in industrial-age insurgency. Not only was the campaign predominantly focused in highly populated urban centers, but the insurgents maintained mass public as well as international support. These factors militated against settlement control and the ability to separate the insurgents from the population, an integral component of previous successes. The development of indigenous

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<sup>14</sup> Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw, "Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict," RAND Corporation (Santa Monica, CA, 1991), 34.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies* (London: Routledge, 2001), 158.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 156.

forces proved impractical, due to the fear of reprisals by insurgents that also inhibited the progress of hearts and minds campaigns and required costly infusions of British soldiers, dramatically limiting intelligence gathering potential relative to the use of local forces. Additionally, the limited political incentives on offer from the British were in no sense equal to the prospect of full independence demanded by the insurgents, and the subsequent substitution of popular incentives with mass punishment served to further legitimize and strengthen the insurgency.<sup>19</sup> The ratio of British soldiers to insurgents, nearly 20 to 1 in Cyprus as compared to 3 to 1 in Malaya and .4 to 1<sup>20</sup> in Kenya indicates the difficulty of the British position by the end of the 1950s. As such, Cyprus exemplifies the evolving role in counterinsurgency of political solutions beyond limited incentives intended to preserve the status quo. Also, the role of military force in urban counterinsurgency is more clearly identified. Despite an overwhelming military presence on the island, a military solution was unattainable. Metz and Millen point out that military action most directly targeting insurgents has rarely been strategically decisive and tends to further alienate both the public and the international community, while also deterring government supporters and inspiring insurgent recruits.<sup>21</sup> Further, the Cyprian case demonstrates that insurgents can effectively seize and maintain strategic initiative due to what Metz and Millen describe as inherently greater flexibility and lack of ethical and legal constraints. Lastly, this case illustrates that both protagonists will pursue a strategy of retributive violence along similar trajectories as long as victory seems attainable through such means and the costs of continuing a violent campaign are less than the costs of pursuing an alternate strategy.<sup>22</sup>

The cases of the Italian Red Brigades and Argentine Montoneros demonstrate that national insurgencies are vulnerable to similar methods of state response initially witnessed in the liberation insurgencies of Malaya, Kenya, and in Cyprus to a lesser

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19 Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Taw, "Defense Policy and Low-Intensity Conflict," RAND Corporation (Santa Monica, CA, 1991), 18.

20 Ibid, 38.

21 Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 9.

22 Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 14.



extent, although important distinctions in counterinsurgency strategy as applied to each period can be identified. The Italian and Argentine cases both reflected the characteristics of national insurgencies rather than the liberation insurgencies of the early 1960s, although the Argentine Montoneros and the Italian Red Brigades to a lesser degree both framed their violent campaigns in terms of liberation from a foreign-dominated system of government. The divergent characteristics of state response that in both cases successfully subdued insurgent violence demonstrate the utility of military and law enforcement approaches in relation to the evolving nature of insurgent behavior. For instance, the Italian Carabinieri were able to exploit interpersonal links between the legal Communist Party of Italy and the members of underground insurgent groups. This permitted the Carabinieri to conduct a national counterinsurgency campaign based on the traditional law-enforcement minimum-force paradigm, whereby the military, intelligence, and administration functions were centralized and the regular military supported law-enforcement as needed, much like in Malaya, Kenya, and when possible in Cyprus.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, the Argentine government relied on a war paradigm that mobilized the military and security apparatus against whole segments of the population, such that by the mid to late 1970s, a concentrated and comprehensive policy of state repression successfully neutralized the Montonero threat.<sup>24</sup> Unlike the Italian case, the negative externalities of the Argentine response in terms of long-term social and political ramifications suggest that a war paradigm is generally unsuited to the conditions of contemporary insurgency, especially if waged by a modern, liberal democratic state.<sup>25</sup>

While differing in methods, the Argentine and Italian responses both highlight the amplification of characteristics that impeded British counterinsurgency efforts in Cyprus, including an almost exclusively urban-orientation, considerable trans-border connectivity, and substantial domestic as well as international support for the insurgent

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23 Max G. Manwaring, "Shadows of things Past and Images of the Future: Lessons for the Insurgencies in Our Midst," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 33.

24 Maria Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol* (Yale University Press, 1995), 84.

25 Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies* (London: Routledge, 2001), 92.

campaign, more so in the case of the Red Brigades.<sup>26</sup> The predominantly urban focus of insurgency in this period may be partially explained by dramatically increasing rates of urbanization in recent decades, particularly in the developing world. By the year 2000, the developing world accounted for sixty-eight percent of the global urban-dwelling population,<sup>27</sup> and demographic trends indicate that this rate will increase. Simply put, insurgency occurs where the people are, suggesting that urban insurgency will likely be the dominant form of sub-national violence in the future.

The significance of the move to cities is partially apparent in the difficulties industrial-age armies have experienced in recent counterinsurgency campaigns, including Panama City, Kuwait City, Mogadishu, Port-au-Prince, Grozny, Sarajevo, Palestine, and now Baghdad. Contemporary urban insurgency, particularly in recent US experience often conforms to Krulak's "3-Block" model, wherein counterinsurgency forces can be expected to perform humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping operations, and "highly lethal mid-intensity battle" all within the close confines of a few city blocks.<sup>28</sup> The corresponding deceleration and indecisiveness of military operations, use of asymmetrical and low-tech methodology, and high casualty rates<sup>29</sup> that characterize contemporary urban engagements reintroduces the protractedness and ambiguity of classic industrial-age insurgency while mitigating the advantages of industrial-age urban counterinsurgency strategy.

Additionally, the move to cities has markedly affected the dynamics of insurgent mobilization, due in part to basic proximity, but more importantly as a result of increased access to information technology (IT). As the information revolution proliferates globally and the "digital divide" narrows in the developing world, the availability of advanced communications technologies to insurgent forces will increase. One prominent theory

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26 Max G. Manwaring, "Shadows of things Past and Images of the Future: Lessons for the Insurgencies in Our Midst," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004), <<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/>> (July 2005), 23.

27 United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision: World Urban Population, 1950-2000 with Projections to 2020. (New York, 2001), <<http://people.hofstra.edu/geotrans/eng/ch6en/conc6en/worldurbanization.html>>

28 Robert Hahn and Bonnie Jezior, "Urban Warfare and the Urban Warfighter of 2025," Parameters, Summer 1999, <<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/parahome.htm>>

29 Ibid.

that seeks to identify the relationships between contemporary sub-national conflict and the spread of the information revolution was first introduced in 1993, and has been termed “netwar.”

## **2. Information-Age Insurgency Theory**

Netwar theory maintains that the information revolution has dramatically altered the nature of conflict, such that much of the industrial-age model must be reconceptualized in order to reflect the emerging realities of the information-age. The theory posits that the information revolution has privileged networked forms of organization and a more decisive role of information and communications in the conduct and conclusion of conflicts.<sup>30</sup> Further, the theory states that the characteristics of information-age protagonists differ markedly from their industrial-age counterparts in terms of more “diffuse, dispersed, multidimensional, nonlinear, and ambiguous” characteristics.<sup>31</sup> These qualities are shared in the two facets of netwar theory, relating first to properties of social activism, militant and otherwise, generally viewed as a promising element for societies, and second to criminal and terrorist groups waging some variety of sub-national or non-state struggle short of conventional warfare.<sup>32</sup> This study is focused primarily on the latter aspect, the most important characteristics of which are distinguished by structural conditions, political opportunities, and mobilization structures.

Structural conditions refer to the configuration of objective circumstances in society affecting the development and orientation of insurgent activity. For the purposes of this study, structures include the socio-economic and political stratification that generally form the basis of expressed grievances, as in the cases of national versus liberation insurgency articulated in the previous section. Although netwar theory indirectly addresses structure in this traditional sense, two aspects of the model are noteworthy in this regard. Netwar presupposes a wide range of competition at the societal level waged by complex, dense, cascading structures consisting of overlapping networks

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<sup>30</sup> Arquilla, John, and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-789-OSD, 1996), 6.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>32</sup> David Ronfeldt and Armando Martínez, “A Comment on the Zapatista Netwar,” in *In Athena’s Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, eds. John Arquilla, and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 1997), 371.

that transcend different societal strata and vary regarding levels of exclusivity.<sup>33</sup> As such, a primary structural precondition outlined by the theory is the existence of an array of associative networks engaged in competition within a society, typically against the state.<sup>34</sup> Informing this view of the necessity of social networks is the assumption that the information revolution favors networked structures. In this sense, the second structural precondition relates to information-age capabilities. Netwar requires that potential sub-national protagonists have access to information technology on a general level, the so-called “democratization” of IT, in addition to a high degree of technological proficiency, particularly regarding communications.<sup>35</sup>

Netwar theory also considers the interactions between the protagonists and the wider environment in relation to how these interactions change and how such changes affect the behavior of the protagonists, outcomes described by Tilly as political opportunities.<sup>36</sup> Conventional examples of political opportunities include a state’s reduced capacity or penchant for repression, the relative openness of the institutional political system, and relationships to and among the elite establishment, all of which represent opportunities to increase the accessibility of the political sphere. Such opportunities partially determine the form and timing of the netwar protagonists’ efforts<sup>37</sup> and are particularly apparent in two related aspects: the structure of state response, and the availability of havens. The netwar model emphasizes that most states are comprised of large, centralizing, bureaucratic establishments composed of institutional hierarchies that prefer to act alone when possible.<sup>38</sup> These characteristics limit a state’s effectiveness

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33 David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, “What Next for Networks and Netwars?” in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 316.

34 Michele Zanini and Sean J.A. Edwards, “The Networking of Terror in the Information Age,” in *Networks and Netwars The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 31.

35 Ronfeldt, David and Armando Martínez, “A Comment on the Zapatista Netwar,” in *In Athena’s Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 1997), 372.

36 Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 7.

37 Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, “Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements.” In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

38 David Ronfeldt, *Tribes, Institutions, Markets, Networks-A Framework About Societal Evolution* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, P-7967, 1996), 13.

when confronted by networked adversaries that tend to combine segments of small, dispersed organizations acting relatively autonomously but with coordination and shared intent.<sup>39</sup> The capacity of most traditional hierarchical instruments of state power to detect, target, and repress networked adversaries in a coherent and effective way has been low, as the persistence of networked protagonists ranging from Columbia to Central Asia exemplifies. In this way, networked actors can exploit openings within relatively controlled political space where hierarchies may be slow or unable to respond. Should a state become more effective at repressing networked adversaries, the availability of havens becomes proportionally more critical. Havens are defined by Fantasia and Hirsch as spaces safe from harassment and surveillance that foster oppositional culture and group solidarity.<sup>40</sup> As networked structures often overlap and interconnect in ways that easily transcend barriers such as national boundaries, the ability of diffuse netwar actors to exploit a range of havens simultaneously prolongs the effectiveness of their campaign.

In practical terms, a haven provides the political space necessary for further mobilization, what Tilly describes as the process used by an organization to gain collective control over the resources needed for action.<sup>41</sup> The mechanisms that groups develop in order to acquire these resources for operations over sustained periods have been termed mobilization structures.<sup>42</sup> Netwar identifies two principal components of mobilization structures: organizational design, and external connectivity. Organizational design refers to the form and functions of an organization's structure. For instance, the principal role of communications in networked organization has been noted, including all manner of interaction from advanced technology to basic interpersonal contact. While netwar articulates certain technological and social dynamics for optimal communication capacity, the most prominent functional aspects in this regard relate to the structural

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39 Michele Zanini and Sean J.A. Edwards, "The Networking of Terror in the Information Age," in *Networks and Netwars The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 30.

40 Rick Fantasia and Eric L Hirsch, "Culture in Rebellion: The Appropriation and Transformation of the Veil in the Algerian Revolution," in *Social Movements and Culture*, Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, eds., (Minneapolis: UM Press, 1995), 46.

41 Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 7.

42 Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald, "Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements." In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

design of the organization.<sup>43</sup> Industrial-age non-state protagonists generally embraced formal, hierarchically-based, functionally exclusive organizations similar to the state institutions that they were contending against.<sup>44</sup> Insurgent efforts ranging in time and location from Argentina to Cyprus exemplify the proliferation of the concentrated Leninist organizational form. In contrast, information-age protagonists have no such precise horizontal and vertical reporting relationships that govern the flow of communications, coordination, command, and control. There is no central leadership or single headquarters where command capabilities might be targeted. Centralized decision-making gives way to mutual consultation and local-level initiative, enhancing the flexibility and adaptability of the organization.<sup>45</sup>

These properties vary according to the organizational form adapted. Networked protagonists are known to adopt variations and combinations of three principal designs:<sup>46</sup> the chain design, where actors interact sequentially within limited channels; the hub design, where interactions between groups of actors are channeled through a central core; and the all-channel design, where interactions are constant and flow to and from each actor in the organization. The relatively flat all-channel design is the ideal structure in terms of communication, although in practice most groups adopt combinations of the three designs for task efficiency, such as an all-channel design at the core of a group and a chain design for executing decisions at the periphery.<sup>47</sup>

One important feature in each design is the role of leadership. In the absence of a centralized structure, leadership is often dispersed throughout the organization, a property

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43 David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, "What Next for Networks and Netwars?" in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 322.

44 John, Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-789-OSD, 1996), 6.

45 David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, "What Next for Networks and Netwars?" in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 325.

46 Ibid.

47 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-789-OSD, 1996), 9.

contributing to the resiliency of networks to counter-leadership strikes.<sup>48</sup> Despite such dispersion, doctrine and strategy are functions of centralized decision-making, such that commonality of purpose is maintained when different segments of the organization act autonomously.<sup>49</sup> An additional feature of the network form is the quality of the associative connections that enable the internal and external links comprising the internettted structure. It is argued that successful netwar actors generally superimpose advanced communications and organizational forms over pre-existing social networks, capped by coherent doctrines, strategies, and narratives.<sup>50</sup> Associative networks, be they kinship or clan based, occupational, or religious in nature are portrayed as pre-tooled cultural repositories reflecting the stratification of society. As such, social networks exhibit varying degrees of shared norms, values, and reciprocal trust<sup>51</sup> depending on the exclusivity of a particular social sphere. For example, family, clan, or religious groups tend toward exclusivity, while social ties based on shared occupation or political affiliation are generally more inclusive. In netwar, the exclusivity of the organization's social structure is a key property for ensuring information security and resisting outside penetration. Conversely, the most inclusive structures are more appropriate for the all-channel optimization of information flow, and savvy netwar actors overlap these two types at critical junctures in order to affect a desirable balance.<sup>52</sup>

The properties of associative networks also relate to the second element of network mobilization structures, referring to the establishment and maintenance of numerous links to external entities, especially other netwar actors, although the range of potential contacts is limited only by the availability of communications resources. This property is termed connectivity and deviates from industrial-age models of the life-cycle of an insurgency. These models describe a phased-progression of organization, terrorism,

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48 David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla, "What Next for Networks and Netwars?" in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 327.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid, 324.

51 Ibid, 344.

52 John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *The Advent of Netwar* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-789-OSD, 1996), 10.

guerilla warfare, and ultimately mobile or conventional war against the state.<sup>53</sup> This process requires steadily increasing amounts of active and passive popular support, culminating in some form of popular revolutionary structure should the insurgency succeed in toppling a national government. In contrast, information-age actors are more likely to explore alternative methods of financing and acquiring war materiel in the organization-phase that diminish the necessity of active mass public support in later stages. While T.E. Lawrence famously observed a similar property of industrial age insurgency, noting that only two-percent of a population was required to actively support an insurgency,<sup>54</sup> this calculation did not account for the support of an interested state sponsor, such as Great Britain, in the insurgent effort. This dynamic was replicated with increasing frequency during the national insurgencies in the latter half of the Cold War.

Conversely, contemporary insurgent groups are increasingly likely to cultivate relationships at the sub-national level, replacing overt state sponsorship with ties to non-state actors such as violent transnational enterprises (VTEs). These groups provide access to alternative markets and resources such that insurgent groups require only the passivity of a population in circumstances short of orthodox civil war.<sup>55</sup> Contemporary VTEs are highlighted as evolving practitioners of netwar concepts, forming spontaneously in order to exploit emerging market trends or created and directed by a core of actors in pursuit of specific objectives.<sup>56</sup> The term “enterprises” has been chosen to draw a distinction between the more common traditional criminal organizations (TCOs) that in customary usage refers to traditional, hierarchically-structured organized crime groups, mafias and the like. These groups are driven by profit and are rooted in the local setting, although much of their activity entails cross-border interactions with affiliates in neighboring states. The term VTE refers to segments of the broad stratum of violent non-state actors that are beginning to adopt information-age organization and behavior, and also includes

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53 Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (Harrisburg, Pa: Stackpole Books, 1971), 38.

54 Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies* (London: Routledge, 2001), 20.

55 Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response,” (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 15.

56 Phil Williams, “Transnational Criminal Networks,” in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 69.



the emerging class of transnational terrorist actors. These groups are driven by political motives, based internationally, and exhibit the dispersed properties of assets and leadership that are characteristic of netwar actors.<sup>57</sup> VTEs maintain global reach and capabilities through a complex structure of affiliates and overlapping networks. These properties allow VTEs to pursue specific political interests in a wide variety of geographic and political settings.

### **3. The Third-Generation Gang Model**

The third generation gang model stems from netwar theory, and was developed in the late 1990s in response to emerging trends in the American drug trade. Investigators increasingly identified links between transnational distribution networks based in Latin America and street-level gangs based in the United States, and began to question the potential of certain groups such as urban gangs to embrace characteristics of netwar actors, especially in relation to networked organizational structure and behavior and the use of advanced IT and communications. The street-level designation refers to the degree of interaction that is rooted in and is most consequential to the local setting. Street-level groups are those that are oriented and engaged locally through associational ties, resources, and allegiance. The street-level group represents the lowest echelon of the continuum of actors examined in this study, with transnational or global actors occupying the highest level. A transnational or sub-state actor may also engage at the street-level, however they are not considered a street-level group unless their orientation is narrowly focused and rooted in the local setting. The terms “street-level” and “local-level” are used interchangeably. One concept gradually taking shape describes a three-phase progression of street-level gangs into criminal netwar actors. This “third generation gang” (3G2) model adds new context and trajectories of group evolution onto the netwar framework by considering the nature of street-level gang-VTE interaction and the potential effects on state stability and security. The term 3G2 applies to a particular group or organization in addition to the progression of street-level gangs from small, territorial, opportunistic

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<sup>57</sup> I coined this term instead of using “Transnational Criminal Enterprise” because while criminal, VTEs also tend to have an ideological component and I wanted to distinguish them from locally-based criminal organizations.

collectives into more sophisticated, internationalized, commercial and political enterprises.<sup>58</sup>

The foundation of this process is known as the first generation form, characterized by individual, opportunistic criminal activity loosely organized and led, resembling a traditional clan or family structure and based on loyalty and territorial protection (see figure 2 below).<sup>59</sup> This focus on territory and localism is replaced by market awareness, as second-generation gangs evolve from opportunism to entrepreneurial drug-centered enterprises, the stage of development most commonly associated with contemporary gangs.<sup>60</sup> Entrepreneurial drug gangs are rigidly structured organizations that are often confused with traditional organized crime, due in large part to similar motivations for the use of extreme violence. The issue is further confused by the mutual interests drug distribution organizations share with second-generation gangs regarding market presence.<sup>61</sup> Competition and protection of markets drive second-generation gangs toward ever-increasing levels of violence and technological acquisition, facilitated through interactions with international supply and distribution cartels.<sup>62</sup> The final evolutionary form, the 3G2 itself, is an ultra-politicized criminal netwar enterprise, operating internationally and combining elements of the first two forms but with substantially greater sophistication.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Max G. Manwaring, "Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2005), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 10.

<sup>59</sup> John P. Sullivan and Robert J. Bunker, "Drug Cartels, Street Gangs, and Warlords," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Special Issue edited by Robert J. Bunker "Non-State Threats and Future Wars," 13, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 49.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Tom Hayden, *Street Wars and the Future of Violence* (New York: The New Press, 2004), 115.

<sup>62</sup> John P Sullivan, "Gangs, Hooligans, and Anarchists- the Vanguard of Netwar in the Streets," in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt,(Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 108.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 112.

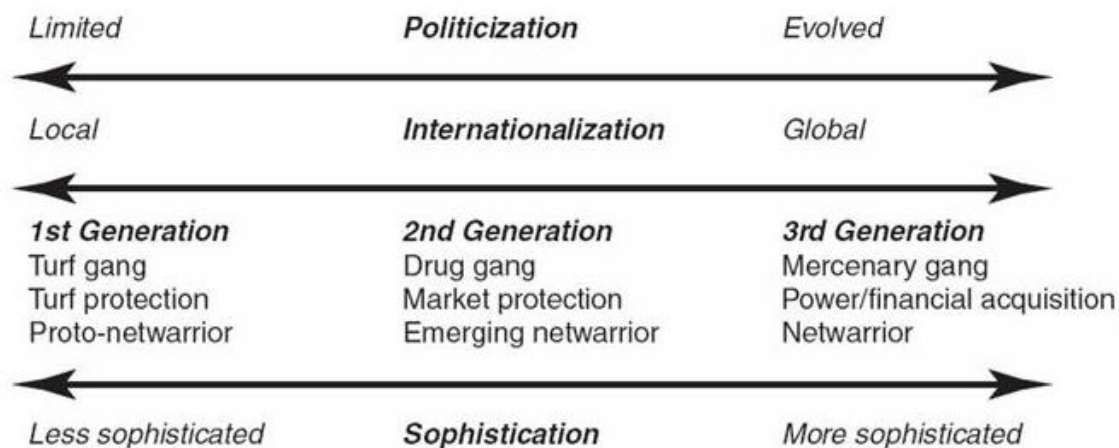


Figure 2. Evolving Characteristics of Street-gangs (From John Sullivan, "Gangs, Hooligans, and Anarchists- the Vanguard of Netwar in the Streets," in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds. *Networks and Netwars The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 103.)

The outcomes of this progression are the control by 3G2 actors of enclaves or para-states within a targeted country, or the direct or indirect control of a targeted state through the establishment of a criminal-state.<sup>64</sup> As an adaptation of netwar theory, these trajectories are informed by many of the same premises, with some notable innovations. In terms of structural conditions, the 3G2 framework places the array of associative networks and availability of usable technology within the context of states that are constrained by minimal capacity, poor economic performance, and measurable social and political disparities.<sup>65</sup> This combination of factors presents a broad range of political opportunities for aspiring 3G2 actors to consolidate or expand their political ambitions, including: increases in corruptible urban enclaves that weaken legitimate political centers; declining security capabilities that constrain state response; and conflicts between and within the traditional elite establishment as status quo power-sharing arrangements begin to crumble. Given the particular advantages of networked actors in terms of mobilization capacity, it is argued that evolving street-level gangs are likely to exploit each of these opportunities in the pursuance of the lawless enclaves or criminal-

<sup>64</sup> Max G. Manwaring, "Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2005), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 12.

<sup>65</sup> John P. Sullivan and Robert J. Bunker, "Drug Cartels, Street Gangs, and Warlords," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Special Issue edited by Robert J. Bunker "Non-State Threats and Future Wars," 13, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 47.

states described above. This capacity is driven by access to valuable information and exchange relationships via predominantly underground channels. According to the model, underground criminal organizations and VTEs will form loose alliances with one another, with smaller criminal enterprises, and with insurgent movements on an ad-hoc, task specific basis.<sup>66</sup> This enables evolving street-level contenders to acquire specific resources such as advanced weaponry and communications, as well as financial opportunities and infrastructure through existing smuggling and distribution networks maintained by VTEs.

Such a relationship integrates several levels of analysis, spanning from the street-level actor to the global realm, and is a defining feature of the 3G2 model. Interactions between VTEs and street-level contenders are described in terms of a labor-management relationship, whereby the VTE maintains the capital resources, i.e. advanced IT and communications expertise, wholesale supplies of illicit and licit resources, and access to global markets, and the street-level gang furnishes human resources for the distribution of goods and provision of services.<sup>67</sup> Services include contract killing, physical protection of assets, and information gathering.<sup>68</sup> A confluence of interests is thought to exist such that both parties seek to erode the effective sovereignty of the nation-state, ousting or manipulating the government of a country or a segment of the country.<sup>69</sup>

Equally damaging is the ability of an evolving 3G2 actor to maintain links to legitimate institutions within society, such as the political establishment, law enforcement, and the judiciary. A subtle process of corruption and intimidation is thought to work in tandem with more overt, violent methods to neutralize institutional barriers and assert de facto political control over a limited domain. As a series of small conquests develops into an integrated network, it is thought that 3G2 actors would eventually be in a position to dominate an entire nation state.<sup>70</sup> Through such a process, a street-gang may

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<sup>66</sup> John P Sullivan, "Gangs, Hooligans, and Anarchists- the Vanguard of Netwar in the Streets," in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001), 117.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Max G. Manwaring, "Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2005), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 12.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 17.

evolve from a violent, street-level entity exploiting a failed community into a sophisticated, politically motivated enterprise with international reach, and structured to maximize technological and interpersonal resources.

#### **4. Gang Theory**

Gang theory articulates in greater detail the processes of street-level interaction that inform much of the 3G2 concept. The relevance of gang theory to contemporary insurgency may seem questionable to some. In the American tradition in particular, it is commonly accepted that the origins, development, and proliferation of criminal gangs represents an entirely different type of process than that associated with the appearance of insurgent groups.<sup>71</sup> Gang members are, after all, typically criminals and as such suggest a law-enforcement based response. Conversely, insurgents challenge the legitimacy and authority of a state through the use of military-style tactics, and thus represent a military threat to be dealt with in kind. Insurgent violence is an issue of national security and sovereignty, while street-crime is the domain of municipal police. Closer inspection reveals that in spite of these ostensible differences, street-gangs and insurgent groups are more closely linked than is commonly thought. Both groups occupy positions on a continuum of non-state actors that rely on violence as the primary means of obtaining their objectives.<sup>72</sup> The urban focus of contemporary insurgency makes this correlation even more pronounced. Gang theory investigates the relationships between grievances, social structures, mobilization, violence, and the enforcement mechanisms of the state that confront each actor within an urban context, including insurgent groups. The particular relevance of gang-theory now is that gang behavior is changing in certain discernable ways that may provide a useful way to conceptualize likely patterns of insurgent-group development in similar urban environments.

Common themes explored by recent contributions to gang literature have been the diversity and complexity of contemporary street gangs and their general tendency to

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71 Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 17.

72 Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Protégés, Clients, Cannon Fodder: Civilians in the Calculus of Militias", in *Managing Armed Conflicts in the Twenty-first Century, Special Review of International Peacekeeping*, 7, 4 (Winter 2001) 120 and Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 99.

defy convention.<sup>73</sup> To date, the literature has not developed an exhaustive or mutually agreed upon definition of a “gang.” For the purposes of this study, the term “gang” will refer to a formal street-level collective that views its main purpose as providing social and economic benefits to its members and its community.<sup>74</sup> Established street gangs such as Chicago’s Gangster Disciples and Latin Kings, and Los Angeles’ 18<sup>th</sup> Street are comprised of tens of thousands of members from divergent geographic and ethnic backgrounds that invariably affect the form, motivations, and methods that characterize their organizational dynamics and interactions with wider society, particularly with regard to relationships with law enforcement and other elements of the state.

Gang theory emphasizes the role of structural conditions within a society in terms analogous to netwar theory and the 3G2 model. Gang theory highlights the decaying social structure of contemporary urban life as a principal contributor to the formation and proliferation of modern street-level gangs. Studies conducted mainly in the United States consider the effects of dramatic socio-economic dislocation, decreasing urban tax bases, and declines in public sector investment. These factors combine with steady influxes of migrants to result in masses of newly arrived and unemployed, populating deteriorating neighborhoods with little economic or physical security.<sup>75</sup> Such an environment reinforces the role of associative networks for survival, furnishing street-level groups ample political opportunity by formalizing their role as cultural repositories of the solidarity, protection, and economic mobility in low-income neighborhoods.<sup>76</sup>

**a. Street-Level Mobilization**

Gang theory emphasizes that in order for street-gangs to sustain or enlarge this role, mobilization structures broadly defined by organizational form and external links to wider society must be effective. The two factors influencing the organizational

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<sup>73</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); L. Kontos, D. Brotherton and L. Barrios, eds, *Gangs and Society: Alternative Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)

<sup>74</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 197.

<sup>75</sup> Ric Curtis, “The Negligible Role of Gangs in Drug Distribution in New York City in the 1990s,” in *Gangs and Society: Alternative Perspectives*, eds. L. Kontos, David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 45

<sup>76</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 38.

model that street gangs will adopt are the gang's short and long-term goals, and the economic, social, and political conditions in which gangs must operate.<sup>77</sup> Similar to netwar actors, street-gangs adopt different combinations of organizational forms depending on the existence of threats and/or opportunities. The three ideal-type models that gangs are known to employ are the top-down, hierarchical form, the horizontal/consultative form, and the all-channel/influential form. The hierarchical form has a traditional vertical structure with clearly defined channels of authority and responsibility. This design typically indicates that the viability of a gang relies on generating large sums of money for collective use, as the intensity of urban competition for markets and territory demands relatively strict oversight and control of resources.<sup>78</sup> The horizontal/consultative design distributes power equally, with interchangeable roles and consensus-based decision making, and the all-channel/influential form is characterized by a small core of dedicated members who share authority and direct the operations of the gang based on mutual interest.<sup>79</sup> Although the horizontal and influential forms exhibit the greatest similarities to netwar-type constructs, the most powerful and sophisticated street-level gangs tend to rely on variations of the vertical design.<sup>80</sup>

The design adopted also affects the capability of a street gang to effectively maintain links to wider society. Theory suggests that street-level collective interaction with wider society takes place on three levels: with the community, social service institutions, and law enforcement.<sup>81</sup> Jankowski describes gang-community interaction as a functional association based on a number of "exchange relationships"<sup>82</sup> in which the organization and the community provide reciprocal services. This relationship is the pivotal element of the street-gang mobilization structure, as the community provides (or denies) the integral political space for organizational development. Not only

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<sup>77</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 68.

<sup>78</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 184.

<sup>79</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 71.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 233.

is the local community the primary source of gang-member recruitment, it also represents the communications, surveillance, and information infrastructure necessary for operations against competing organizations.<sup>83</sup>

At the street-level, strong community affiliation is also recognized as a critical component of the organization's defensive capabilities, providing the necessary haven as outlined above, while also acting as the primary legitimizer of the organization's existence.<sup>84</sup> The benefits received by the street-gang are only one side of the exchange, whereby the community expresses an expectation of reciprocity, generally in the forms of protection and access to resources.<sup>85</sup> The latter commodity is a function of both the organization's financial success in entrepreneurial markets, and more importantly on the interactions between the organization and social service agencies of the state. Jankowski observes that state agencies and street-gangs develop a kind of symbiotic interpenetration.<sup>86</sup> He suggests that the momentum of bureaucratic expansion drives social service agents to best serve their segment of the community, while the street-gangs focus any available social service resources toward their community of interest. As such, both parties are keen to facilitate an ever expanding relationship. A similar dynamic, although at an appreciably lower level, describes street-gang interaction with law enforcement. In many respects, law enforcement is eager to establish contacts within the organization in order to break the otherwise substantial entry barriers of secrecy and community non-cooperation. Barrios describes routine exchanges of information between gang leadership and law enforcement, and police attempt to exploit any interaction by cultivating informers and extracting information about the gang and its rivals.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, street gangs are known to pursue formal contacts with local elected officials, although on a less frequent basis. Jankowski observes that gangs in New York

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>84</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 251 and Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 199.

<sup>85</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 182.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>87</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 300.



and Boston were able to establish consistent, direct ties to high level municipal officials and elected politicians.<sup>88</sup> As at the community level, exchange relationships are formed, typically some variety of “get out the vote” effort performed by the gang in exchange for monetary rewards or access to other resources.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, street organizations may attempt to leverage political contacts during periods of unusually intense law enforcement pressure, although the outcomes of these efforts are variable.<sup>90</sup>

***b. Competition and Truce-Making***

Gang theory also identifies trends in street-level competition and truce-making. Competition in and of itself is the sine qua non of street-gang development. Competition structures the formal role that street-gangs fulfill in low-income areas. Even in traditional kinship-based or first-generation gangs, competition for prestige and territory drives many aspects of group activity.<sup>91</sup> According to Jankowski’s model of gang behavior, street gangs view all other street-level organizations as predatory competitors,<sup>92</sup> including law enforcement. Street-level competition takes several forms. Gangs routinely compete for territory, markets, distribution rights, prestige, and a range of other resources, and the primary means of competition at the street-level is small-group violence.

Street-gangs will initiate hostilities as an organization against other street-level contenders when either the economic calculus weighs in favor of doing so, even in cases when the targeted group is not a rival, or when the internal dynamic of the gang is destabilized or distressed.<sup>93</sup> Competition at this level is a lengthy, iterative process of low-level retributive violence that a typical street-gang is capable of sustaining until

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<sup>88</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 233.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> John P Sullivan, “Gangs, Hooligans, and Anarchists- the Vanguard of Netwar in the Streets,” in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, eds. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, MR-880-OSD/RC, 2001)103, and Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 182.

<sup>92</sup> Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 208.

<sup>93</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 104 and Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 160.

victory or self-exhaustion.<sup>94</sup> Findings indicate that in most cases, the gang that first initiates hostilities will ultimately succeed against a targeted group.<sup>95</sup> As such, pre-emption is the prevailing strategic rationale that guides gang competition. While inter-gang disputes are known for their extreme violence, the overwhelming majority of gang-related violence is perpetrated by individual gang-members outside of the organizational context.<sup>96</sup> In these cases, organizational violence between gangs is motivated by vendetta, in addition to the standard dynamics of competition. Such competitive hostility between gangs is known to rapidly escalate, characterized by the introduction of advanced weaponry to include military-grade high explosives, car-bombs, and rocket launchers.<sup>97</sup>

Competitive interaction with law enforcement adopts a similar form. Gangs are known to target law enforcement following periods of intensified police pressure, and will sustain low-level violence until encroachment subsides.<sup>98</sup> As such, street-level gangs will adopt a posture of violent offense tactically while on the defensive strategically. This tendency is due to the effects of violent confrontation on the internal dynamics of street gangs. Even in cases of rigidly-structured hierarchical gangs, periods of intense pressure produce a decentralizing effect, shifting organizational forms toward the horizontal/consultative type of structure until levels of pressure decline.<sup>99</sup> This type of decentralization loosens the degree of collective control that gang-leadership can exercise over the rank-and-file, in addition to compelling the most violent and extreme elements from within the gang into positions of greater prominence.<sup>100</sup> Emerging elements can then pose a direct challenge to existing leadership for control of gang resources, or bolt

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94 Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 160.

95 Ibid, 161.

96 Ibid, 140.

97 George W. Knox, "Bomb and Arson Crimes Among American Gang Members,"

*National Gang Crime Research Center*, 2001, < <http://www.ngcrc.com/bombarso.html> > (7/20/2005).

98 Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 168.

99 Ibid, 76.

100 Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Counter-Gangs* (London: Barrie and Rockliff. 1960), 114 and David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 321.

with the most extreme faction to form a rival organization.<sup>101</sup> In all cases, structural decentralization yields a net increase in the overall level of violence.

When the extreme violence of street-level competition reaches a level unacceptable to members of the community, hinders market access and efficiency, or threatens the organizational survival of the protagonists, efforts to effect a truce settlement will succeed.<sup>102</sup> Repeated damage to community property or victimization of community members will rapidly reduce levels of community support, an essential pillar of the street-level mobilization structure. In general terms, repeated acts of violence against community members indicate the beginning stages of organizational instability and eventual decline.<sup>103</sup> Without the havens, resources, and recruits afforded by solid community relations, street-gangs are unsustainable organizationally. If threatened in this manner, or confronted by mutual existential threats such as the rise of a third-party contender, the protagonists will seek a comprehensive truce. According to Hayden, expanded law enforcement presence within a conflict zone indirectly affects this process by interrupting illicit transactions, thereby enhancing the economic incentives to normalize relations.<sup>104</sup> Yet broadly speaking, the dynamics of truce making are internal functions driven by the relationships between the street-level groups and the communities needed as bases of support.

### **C. CONCLUSIONS**

In consideration of the preceding sections, some general themes regarding the evolution of insurgency and low-intensity conflict are apparent. First, the qualities of contemporary insurgency suggest a departure from the industrial-age model of conflict toward an emerging brand of low-intensity conflict that is predominantly urban-oriented and characterized by information-age concepts of strategy and design. The industrial-age model of conflict dictates the following features for a successful counter-insurgency strategy:

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101 David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 186.

102 Tom Hayden, *Street Wars and the Future of Violence* (New York: The New Press, 2004), 65.

103 Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 164.

104 Tom Hayden, *Street Wars and the Future of Violence* (New York: The New Press, 2004), 67.

- The early recognition of an insurgency is essential
- Administrative, police, and military authority should be concentrated and coordinated.
- Sufficient long-term political incentives and social reforms must be developed
- Policing is primary over military operations, and the use of minimum-force in hostile engagements is preferable
- Special Forces and small units should be employment where military force is required
- Indigenous security forces should be well trained and equipped
- “Hearts and minds programs” should be established
- The insurgency should be physically separated of from the population
- Cross-border links and transnational access should be disrupted
- International public opinion should be pacified

Conversely, the information-age model suggests that “hearts and minds programs” and the physical separation of insurgents from the population are unsuited to the emerging environment of urban-centric insurgency. These factors are overshadowed by the tasks of disrupting information technology and communications infrastructures, transnational connectivity, and shaping international public opinion. The remaining tenets of industrial-age counterinsurgency theory are consistent with the transition to an information-age model.

Second, conflict in the information-age will likely involve greater interaction between insurgents and other groups, especially VTEs, than in the past. These links effectively extend the scope of low-intensity conflict from the street-level to the international and global realm, impacting the dynamics of insurgent violence. The 3G2 model posits that these emerging trends in information-age conflict are already affecting the development and orientation of street-gangs in certain discernable ways. As both insurgent groups and street-gangs confront similar structural conditions, opportunities for

political expansion, and mobilization challenges within a predominantly urban context, a solid foundation exists for comparison between these two types of groups.

#### **D. PLAN OF THE STUDY**

Chapter II evaluates the Sunni-led insurgency from the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom until the summer of 2005. I consider the origins of and interactions between the armed groups operating in Iraq for discernable trends in development that are consistent with the 3G2 model. This chapter identifies the most prominent insurgent actors during each phase of the insurgency, and investigates why they continue to attract support. I also investigate what opportunities have permitted insurgent groups to gain political prominence, and what constraints have halted or reversed this process. I then examine how insurgent groups are mobilizing to sustain their operations and support base, and identify the relationships between the most prominent actors. Lastly, I consider how competition between armed groups is affecting inter-group relationships and levels of insurgent violence

Chapter III considers modifications to the 3G2 concept resulting from the Iraq case study in Chapter II, in addition to assessing the utility of an adapted 3G2 framework to the wider GWOT architecture outside of Iraq. I investigate those areas of the 3G2 model that are inadequately considered, and propose refinements based on the results of the Iraq case study. The output of this chapter is an integrated 3G2 model that reflects the most current assessments of the patterns and underlying dynamics of insurgent violence. I then discuss the applicability of this model in GWOT operations outside of Iraq, framing the relevance of the model for strategic use.

In Chapter IV, I review the findings of the study and assess the validity of alternative hypotheses for the Iraqi insurgency. I consider the evolving role of force in COIN strategy and the changing parameters of insurgency in the information age. The lessons from the Iraq case findings are reviewed and the existing 3G2 model is compared to the integrated model presented in Chapter III. I discuss proposals for action based on the results of this study, and highlight areas for further inquiry that may broaden our understanding of insurgent activity and reveal how to effectively minimize the effects of insurgent violence.

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## **II. CASE STUDY OF THE IRAQ INSURGENCY**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the case study of the ongoing insurgency in Iraq in order to assess the utility of the 3G2 concept in the contemporary threat environment. Specifically, this chapter investigates the genesis of and interactions between the armed groups operating in Iraq to discover trends consistent with those predicted by the 3G2 model. I examine the insurgency within the timeframe from the U.S. invasion in March of 2003 to the present. According to U.S. Central Command, during this period the two most challenging areas for street-level insurgent violence have been western Baghdad and al Anbar province, both predominantly Sunni areas. As such, the focus of analysis will follow relevant aspects of the insurgency and examine Sunni participation exclusively. Additionally, the insurgency is considered in terms of its constituent elements rather than as an aggregate whole. This method disaggregates the properties of the disparate groups which contribute to insurgent violence in order to provide a clear assessment of relevant forces and their effects.

The investigation of these groups entails how and where they originated, the conditions that have facilitated their expansion, their current role within the local setting, and the effects of this local presence on the degree of Sunni-led violence. The first section of this chapter considers the prevailing socio-economic structures over time and their role in the genesis of insurgent violence. Specifically, patterns of social cohesion and resource scarcity are considered in relation to the declining capacity of the Iraqi state. The second section explores the type and timing of opportunities that have facilitated the expansion of insurgent groups locally. The third section examines how these groups mobilize to sustain operations, emphasizing the role of organizational structure and connectivity to the broader environment. The last section considers the nature of the relationships between different types of insurgent groups, and how the logic of such interaction is affecting the developing threat environment.

### **B. STRUCTURAL CONDITONS**

Structural conditions within Iraqi society have partially determined the characteristics of insurgent behavior. This is particularly true regarding the role of

informal networks and kinship affiliation in state development, and patterns of resource distribution and scarcity. Both are prominent and well-known components of Saddam Hussein's survival strategy during the latter period of Ba'th Party rule, and are rooted in the dynamics of competition and development dating as far back as the 1920 insurgency against British colonial authority.<sup>105</sup> The ostensible similarities between that period and contemporary events sometimes obscure relevant societal changes that have transpired during the intervening eighty years. Important aspects of this transformation include high rates of population growth and large scale urbanization beginning in the late 1950s. Over the duration of Ba'th rule, urban population growth outpaced growth in rural areas by more than two-hundred percent, giving some indication of the pace and magnitude of change.<sup>106</sup> Such demographic pressures profoundly affected traditional forms of social and political organization, processes that coincided with the rise of the Iraqi Ba'th and bear the imprint of party efforts to consolidate state authority over thirty years of rule. This section considers the effects of state development and consolidation on patterns of social cohesion and resource scarcity from the early period of Ba'th rule until the present. The first segment demonstrates how traditional modes of kinship affiliation were appropriated by a weakened Ba'th regime, and how this altered type of association became the prevailing social mechanism at the time of the U.S. invasion in 2003. The second segment explores the Hussein regime's calculus of resource distribution, highlighting the economic parameters that complemented changes in social structure. The final segment evaluates the role of kinship affiliation and resource scarcity following the U.S. invasion until the present.

### **1. The Role of Informal Networks in State Development**

The local-level prominence of tribal and sub-tribal networks is one notable outcome of the Ba'th drive toward consolidation. Philip Khoury <sup>107</sup> describes the traditional or pre-Ba'th form of social and political organization as "cultural tribalism," whereby a tribe constituted a territorially-defined political entity that organized

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<sup>105</sup> Jacobsen, "Only by the Sword: British Counter-Insurgency in Iraq, 1920," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, (August 1991): 325.

<sup>106</sup> Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Tribal Policies 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 2.

<sup>107</sup> Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990), 26.



fragmented rural populations of small familial, ethnic, client, or ad hoc groups into a political “chieftaincy.” While genealogical factors had organizational significance locally, tribes were primarily the creations of political elites wherein familial, ethnic, or lineage ties were insignificant to the broader organization. In this sense, a loose tribal ideology of kinship may have existed, but the reality of tribal organization and association was based on shared interest, mutual advantage, and service.<sup>108</sup> As demographic pressures mounted, the informal associational ties of cultural tribalism were formalized, although according to new and in some cases unrecognizable patterns. The alienation, hostility, and insecurity that accompanied rural-urban migration were compounded by the need to compete within and manage the stresses of a rapidly changing and unfamiliar environment.<sup>109</sup> As migrants established links through local, often extended familial or clan channels for resources and support, connectivity with traditional tribal political centers became more tenuous, being officially severed by the emerging Ba’th leadership in the mid 1970s.<sup>110</sup> As a consequence, new forms of locally-delineated political and social cohesion developed in urban areas based wholly or in part on lineage solidarity, such that at this level, political arrangements preserved tribal solidarity, and sub-tribal elements such as clan or extended family became predominant.<sup>111</sup> In this way, Ba’th party efforts to limit traditional centers of tribal authority encouraged the growth and proliferation of informal associational links locally. This process conforms to Morton Fried’s observation that modern tribes are the result of state-building,<sup>112</sup> as a brief survey of state and party consolidation demonstrates.

The origin of the Iraqi Ba’th itself reveals a similar dynamic of locally-based communal allegiance. From the outset, personal connections and common sectarian or geographic origins were critical factors in party affiliation. Rooted in semi-tribal villages,

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<sup>108</sup> Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990), 59.

<sup>109</sup> Faleh A. Jabar, “Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998,” in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 89.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990), 27.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 62.

the conspirators of 1968 exploited locally-generated personal and kinship ties in engineering the July coup, managing the internecine party maneuvering that followed,<sup>113</sup> extending eventual control over the state and society. Hussein strategically and liberally used kinship and tribal affiliation since he became influential in 1966 to expand party membership. This provided a firm network of clan and extended family support that guaranteed a smooth transition from the initial military phase of the planned-coup into government.<sup>114</sup> Hussein employed the same means to mobilize the party apparatus once in power, expanding membership from a few hundred at the time of the coup to nearly two million in less than eight years.<sup>115</sup> Jabar identifies this process as “etatist” or state-centered tribalism, whereby a vulnerable or narrow state elite attempts to deconstruct cultural tribal space, and integrate real and fictive tribal lineage and culture into the state in order to solidify the fragile dominance of the elite.<sup>116</sup> Despite having denounced tribalism as antithetical to Ba’th ideology upon seizing power, Hussein sought to solidify his position within the party and in turn consolidate the party within the state by targeting specific Arab and Sunni groups located predominantly in the Sunni triangle, areas west and northwest of the capitol along the Euphrates, for integration into the state apparatus.<sup>117</sup> As such, the bulk of elite military and security services personnel were recruited from Sunni Arab tribal groups such as the Dulaim, Jubbur, and ‘Ubayd, and were commanded by members of Hussein’s immediate or extended family, such that by the mid 1980s, the party and state were consolidated around Hussein, his extended family, the Tikriti establishment that pre-dated Hussein, and tribal groupings based in the Sunni triangle.<sup>118</sup> These structures contributed to the expansion of the single-party

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113 Peter Sluglett, “From Gang to Elite: The Iraqi Ba’th Party’s Consolidation of Power,” *Mediterranean Peoples*, 40 (July-September 1987): 105.

114 Ibid, 93.

115 Faleh A. Jabar, “Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998,” in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 81.

116 Ibid, 71.

117 Peter Sluglett, “From Gang to Elite: The Iraqi Ba’th Party’s Consolidation of Power,” *Mediterranean Peoples*, 40 (July-September 1987): 101 and Faleh Jabar, “Sheikhs and Ideologues...” 85.

118 Hosham Dawod, “The ‘State-ization’ of the Tribe and Tribalization of the State: the Case of Iraq” in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 120 and Amatzia Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn’s Tribal Policies 1991-1996,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 2.

patrimonial state that dominated or destroyed exogenous civil institutions, and encouraged further reliance on the local-level networks described above in terms of resources, support, and refuge from the arbitrary power of the Hussein regime.<sup>119</sup>

Local-level kinship affiliation was increasingly activated as the effects of war and sanctions on the capacity of the state became apparent. Particularly after the 1991 Gulf War, the state was largely impotent in terms of military, economic, and security functions. The process of tribal deconstruction and absorption into the disintegrating party and state was altered such that local-level kinship affiliation was officially revived or reconstructed as an extension of the state itself.<sup>120</sup> The Hussein regime sought to revive the symbols and patterns of authority inherited from cultural tribalism, wherein the party would serve as the broad tribal unit, with authentic or fictive local associations retribalized in supporting roles.<sup>121</sup> At the local level however, the urban-based kinship associations no longer resembled much of the traditional tribal image or patterns of authority. By 1996, officially sanctioned “tribes” were responsible not only for the maintenance of law and order locally, but also collected taxes on behalf of the government, were appointed judicial powers and extended tribal customary law to the extent of their territorial reach. They received arms and ammunition, vehicles, and logistical support as payment for services rendered to the party.<sup>122</sup> Accordingly, long since detribalized segments of the population established new associations in response to the emergent local hegemony of reconstituted tribal elements. In cases where common lineage was no longer discernable, individuals sought affiliation with existing groups or formed new local associations whose tribal leadership was appointed by Baghdad.<sup>123</sup>

Local dominance of revived tribal networks was evident by the 1998 crisis involving the United States, when heavily armed and equipped Sunni tribal units were positioned in and around Baghdad to control the restive urban population, a role formerly

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119 Faleh Jabar, “Sheikhs and Ideologues...” 71.

120 Ibid, 89.

121 Amatzia Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn’s Tribal Policies 1991-1996,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 3.

122 Faleh Jabar, “Sheikhs and Ideologues...” 96.

123 Andrew W Terrill, “Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of US Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq,” Strategic Studies Institute, (July 2003), < <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/> > (July 2005), 27.

belonging to the Ba'th party militia.<sup>124</sup> Elsewhere, however, the interests of the Hussein regime and local-level actors began to diverge. Clan-based groups controlled the highways around Baghdad, engaging in looting, smuggling, and hijacking throughout most of al Anbar province in western Iraq on the Syrian border.<sup>125</sup> From Baghdad to Amman, the Dulaim and Jubbur created conditions such that convoys were necessary even for basic travel in daylight to avoid raids by tribal guerillas.<sup>126</sup> Notably, the Jubbur also furnished most of the recruits for Hussein's elite Republican Guard.<sup>127</sup> By 2000, policemen, judges, and party officials were subject to violent tribal recriminations with impunity, and encounters between Iraqi soldiers and tribal irregulars, especially those based in al Anbar province, escalated in terms of frequency and scale.<sup>128</sup>

## **2. Resource Distribution and Scarcity**

Such conflict marked the emergence of local tribal elements into street-level entrepreneurial markets. These markets comprised a sub-stratum of the informal Iraqi economy that blossomed since the early 1980s due to the chronic resource scarcity accompanying war and unrest, a decade of sanctions, and Hussein's selective distribution of what resources remained available. By directing funds, rations, government positions, electricity, clean water, fuel, and industrial investment toward specific villages in the western Sunni regions in exchange for service to the regime, and withholding resources to other villages as a punitive mechanism, a local-level competitive calculus developed that was perpetuated by Hussein as an instrument of rule.<sup>129</sup> Because the state-level formal economy was dramatically curtailed by sanctions, this competition for resources was pushed to the sub-state informal level, consisting of local and regional economies

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124 Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologies..." 96.

125 Ibid, 98.

126 Ibid, 99.

127 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Tribal Policies 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 7.

128 Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologies..." 99.

129 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Tribal Policies 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 3. and Keiko Sakai, "Tribalization as a Tool of State Control in Iraq: Observations on the Army, the Cabinets and the National Assembly," in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 144.

based on the legal and semi-legal enterprises of the informal sector.<sup>130</sup> Conservative estimates suggest that nearly sixty-eight percent of Iraq's national labor force was active in the informal economy in the latter period of Hussein's rule, accounting for nearly one-third of the total gross domestic product at that time.<sup>131</sup> The tendency of party and state institutions to favor key supporters and engage in fraud and corruption in the distribution of goods and services encouraged informal (and formal) economic actors to rely on local-level mediation by tribal groups.<sup>132</sup> In addition, because informal activity is based in large part on trusted familial and kinship ties, the position of local tribal groups within the informal sector had become increasingly entrenched. By assessing fees for the settlement of disputes and collecting taxes on local production, local tribal groups also began to establish networks of financial support relatively free of state control.<sup>133</sup>

These attempts to legally increase economic mobility were complimented by rising tribal involvement in underground criminal entrepreneurial economies which were especially prominent in the western border regions. Illicit economies were initially based on the cross-border smuggling of animals, tea, alcohol, electronics, and in later stages, humans and narcotics.<sup>134</sup> This later period was marked by more extensive interpenetration of party and state functionaries within tribe-based organized crime, a result both of endemic official corruption and limited legitimate opportunities to acquire official resources. As such, by the end of Hussein's tenure, the entire route along the Euphrates River in Al Anbar from Hit and Haditha to Ubaydi, Al Qaim, and Qusaybah had essentially developed into a sanctuary for illicit traffickers and criminal entrepreneurs.<sup>135</sup> At the same time, massive nation-wide unemployment and a subsistence level below international standards of poverty for almost five million Iraqis (about eighteen percent of the population, up from 143,000, or about .8 percent at the

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130 Robert Looney, "Iraq's Informal Economy," (Arlington, VA: Report for CENTRA Technology, Inc., March 2005), 5.

131 Ibid. 3

132 Ibid. 40

133 Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues..." 95.

134 Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurds, States, and Tribes," in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saki, 2003), 177.

135 Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 18.

beginning of sanctions) indicates the magnitude of structural decay within society at large.<sup>136</sup>

### **3. After the U.S. Invasion: Informal Networks and Resource Scarcity**

At the local level, both resource scarcity and the stature of sub-tribal groups were greatly enhanced following the removal of Hussein. The Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) early adoption of a neo-liberal economic posture<sup>137</sup> impeded the growth of regulatory and legal institutions, impelling businesses and those entering the labor market to rely on the trusted kinship or extended family networks of the informal economy. Shortages of critical inputs such as electricity and fuel, and the dangers of transportation have further encouraged informal entrepreneurs to rely on tribal and extended family associations for protection and support.<sup>138</sup> Additionally, endemic corruption and uncertainty have contributed to a dramatic increase in the informal sector following the 2003 invasion, such that approximately eighty percent of the labor force is now engaged informally, accounting for nearly two-thirds of Iraq's gross national product.<sup>139</sup> This shift is especially clear in certain areas west of the capitol, where the destruction of the Sunni-oriented military establishment and related industries has contributed to a substantial expansion of the informal sector.<sup>140</sup> A principal driver of this growth has been a dramatic rise in criminal activity related to the shadow economy and dominated by local-level tribal elements, including the emerging economies based on the distribution of scarce resources, kidnapping, trafficking in petrol, narcotics, looted weaponry, and the targeting of coalition forces.<sup>141</sup> In areas beyond the control of the transitional Iraqi government and lacking a substantial coalition presence, evidence

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<sup>136</sup> Calculated from Robert Looney, "Iraq's Informal Economy," (Arlington, VA: Report for CENTRA Technology, Inc., March 2005), 16.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 20

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 38

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. 41

<sup>140</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 39.

<sup>141</sup> Robert Looney, "The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq's Shadow Economy," (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 1.

suggests that the shadow economy is rapidly displacing any legal or semi-legal structures that may have survived until the present.<sup>142</sup>

In sum, structural conditions within Iraqi society are impacting the emerging threat environment. The most prominent of these conditions are the state-level social and economic arrangements inherited from the period of Ba'th rule. The major effects of these structures on the origins and orientation of insurgent groups have been identified here. First, the decades-long process of development and consolidation under Saddam Hussein ultimately favored the institutional devolution of state authority to local-level groups that are comprised of genuine or artificially reconstructed tribal associations. Second, in an effort to preserve central authority, the Hussein regime initiated a competitive calculus between and among local-level groups based on the distribution of scarce resources that is discernable in the present context. Third, the emergence of local-level groups as the cultural repository of solidarity and mobility within a competitive, informal economic space has facilitated the expansion of a vibrant shadow economy.

### **C. POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Iraqi society reflected a complex interaction of forces culminating most powerfully at the local-level by the time of the U.S. invasion in 2003. How have the invasion itself and the subsequent periods of occupation and transitional rule affected relationships at this level? The removal of the Hussein regime and the actions of the CPA presented a range of opportunities and constraints that have in part determined the manner in which street-level groups mobilized and generated new opportunities and constraints for both the original actors and follow-on groups over time. The utility of considering these factors is greater than a mere understanding of the effects of past actions as they manifest currently, but is also necessary to conceptualize what political opportunities are developing now, and what likely changes in insurgent dynamics will occur in the future. Because political opportunities relate differently to different actors, I begin by establishing the parameters of the street-level environment in Sunni-dominated areas. For this, a phased chronology in three parts is used that identifies groups of actors

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<sup>142</sup> "U.N.: Iraq Becoming Transit Point for Drugs." *The Associated Press*. May 12, 2005, <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7832667/>> (7/20/2005).

according to their relative prominence and examines the type and timing of opportunities that have facilitated the expansion of insurgent groups during each period.

### **1. Phase One: March 2003-December 2003**

Phase one of this model encompasses the time period from the fall of the Ba'th regime to the winter of 2003, when the Pentagon officially recognized that anti-coalition violence had become a sustained threat. During this phase, the persistent lack of security and the policy directives issued by the CPA accounted for the greatest opportunities for armed groups to expand their positions locally. Within this period, the most prominent actors at the street-level in terms of mobilization potential, organization, and stature within the surrounding community were those legacy groups of local/kinship based "tribal" associations reminiscent of the period under sanctions. As some members of these groups also comprised the personnel infrastructure of the Ba'th security establishment in terms of the intelligence services, *fedayeen*<sup>143</sup> irregulars, and entire army units, coalition officials were at least partially correct when applying the term "former-regime elements" to those groups thought most responsible for the unexpectedly high levels of violence and chaos in the aftermath of the invasion. Such a description implicitly suggests that these groups were also supporters of the Hussein regime, yet the reverse might also have been true. Overt coup and assassination attempts by disaffected Juburri and Dulaimi elements from within the security services complemented the prevailing tribal unrest of the mid-late 1990s, suggesting that many Sunni tribal groups had been clandestinely organizing and arming for insurrection from at least 1995.<sup>144</sup> Such behavior is consistent with patterns of Iraqi resistance, evidenced by the Ba'th coups of 1963 and 1968 that were the culmination of years of clandestine maneuvering according to lineage and local affiliation. These groups are referred to as "tribal groups," and function according to Khoury's model of tribal militia: they are composed of pre-existing social groups within the tribe that come armed and equipped, and they are activated by conflict, inspired leadership, and the prospect of loot.<sup>145</sup> A second tier of street-level

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<sup>143</sup> The term *fedayeen* broadly describes paramilitaries that are prepared to sacrifice themselves for a particular cause, and refers here to the personal militia of Saddam Hussein

<sup>144</sup> Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Tribal Policies 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 5.

<sup>145</sup> Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990), 119.



protagonists was comprised of those groups engaged in entrepreneurial and organized criminal activities, also a legacy of the sanctions period in large measure and based predominantly on local-level associations.<sup>146</sup> While there are indications of at least some degree of overlap between the two tiers, it is worth noting that many tribal groups maintained militias precisely to protect entrepreneurial markets from Ba'ath encroachment, militating against a broad alignment of street-level interests between these groups, at least in the immediate aftermath of the invasion.

The chaotic lawlessness of this period represents the earliest and most substantial opportunity that allowed groups in both tiers to solidify and extend their presence locally. Hesitation on the part of coalition forces to manage the deteriorating security situation in most urban centers and Baghdad in particular acted as a catalyst in the very process of institutional devolution that had been occurring under the Hussein regime. The vacuum that developed in the weeks following the invasion increased the scale and intensity of this process as the role of self-protecting mutual assurance groups matched the precipitous decline of law and order.<sup>147</sup> Armed groups proliferated at the street level corresponding to the territorial boundaries of specific neighborhoods or by kinship affiliation. In such cases, protection of the group and its membership in the uncertain social environment characterized by looting and violence determined the degree and form of collective mobilization. Easy access to munitions through stolen-weapons bazaars facilitated the entry of newly-formed groups onto the street level, sometimes in response to outbreaks of intra-tribal fighting, particularly among the Sunni.<sup>148</sup> This trend highlights the initial position of criminal entrepreneurs and traditional clan-based organized crime, whose stature at the street-level also increased in proportion to the absence of law and order. While occupying the same street-level political space, the interests of these groups were defined largely in terms of greater individual and collective economic mobility.

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<sup>146</sup> Robert Looney, "The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq's Shadow Economy," (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 1.

<sup>147</sup> W. Andrew Terrill, "Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of US Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq," Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute publications, July 2003), 11.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 13

The CPA policies of “de-bathification,” disbanding of the Iraqi national army, and the ambivalence toward the role of militias represent a second political opportunity dramatically augmenting the stature of street-level groups in terms of security and access to resources. This expanded role was consistent with effects of pushing millions of newly-unemployed Iraqis into a system dominated by locally-oriented informal networks, such that the “skills” and associations of the new entrants undoubtedly affected dynamics at the street-level. For instance, the demobilization of entire Republican Guard units that returned to their local settings weapons-in-hand<sup>149</sup> increased the potency of street-level protagonists across the Sunni spectrum. By the closing months of 2003 when coalition officials recognized the potential of a limited insurgency, the role of street-level groups in terms of providing law and order, protection, and access to resources had increased significantly. This trend is due to the confusion and disorder inherent in regime collapse, in addition to the inability of the coalition to reassert order or basic services for months, providing ample and fertile conditions for the emergence of resistance elements.<sup>150</sup>

## **2. Phase Two: December 2003-January 2005**

The second phase spans the end of 2003 until the elections in January 2005. Sustained hostile interaction between coalition troops and local populations, the inability of coalition forces to adequately repress insurgent violence, and the return of sovereignty to the Iraqi government provided the most significant opportunities for insurgent-group expansion during this period. Broadly speaking, the dominant groups at this stage reflected a three-tiered structure. The networks corresponding to the two most prominent types of actors from phase one exhibited a higher degree of overlap in the second phase. This combination of tribally-based former security personnel and criminal groups comprised the first tier. The second and third tiers were occupied by indigenous actors motivated by vendetta, and extremist Islamic ideologies, respectively. During this phase, personal security remained the primary concern of Iraqis in general, although the meaning of security in Sunni-dominated areas had expanded to include security from

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149 W. Andrew Terrill, “Nationalism, Sectarianism, and the Future of US Presence in Post-Saddam Iraq,” Strategic Studies Institute (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute publications, July 2003),15.

150 Jim Dobbins, “America’s Role in Nation Building: From Germany to Iraq,” RAND, 2003 < [www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1753/MR1753.ch1.pdf](http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1753/MR1753.ch1.pdf) > (7/20/2005), 186.

local armed groups in addition to protection from coalition forces.<sup>151</sup> This shift is due in part to increased interactions between coalition forces and the Sunni population as a result of expanded efforts to establish law and order and manage increasingly effective anti-coalition violence. As such, the negative effects of more vigorous coalition encroachment, most evident in the collateral costs of the Fallujah operations and the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib, represented a substantial political opportunity by further legitimizing the existence of armed street-level groups. The effects of Abu Ghraib are significant, since ninety-five percent of all detainees during this period were Sunni Arab.<sup>152</sup> This helped to solidify a perception that the coalition targeted the Sunni community exclusively and indiscriminately. The territorial gains made by encroaching coalition forces in Falluja and similar advances in Samarra, Ramadi, Mosul and Tikrit magnified and in some cases validated much of this perception through near-continuous hostile interaction with local populations. This process facilitated the emergence of the second and third tier of violent street-level actors.<sup>153</sup> These actors, predominantly foreign in the latter case, were easily absorbed by the expanding networks of the most prominent street-level groups that provided both the means and an added incentive to engage in anti-coalition targeting by offering substantial monetary rewards.

These relationships highlight a second political opportunity in the continued difficulty of coalition forces to counter the expansion of local groups, most notably in the vast Sunni stronghold of al Anbar province. Despite the increase in resources devoted to Falluja and Ramadi, the street-level presence of coalition forces had actually diminished in western al Anbar by the end of this phase, retaining a minimal presence at al Qaim and Qusayba.<sup>154</sup> Notably, the local-level presence of Iraqi police and national guards remained at constant levels of virtual or actual nonexistence throughout the province

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151 Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 13.

152 Ibid, 38.

153 American troops on the ground have begun terming these actors POI, or "Pissed-Off-Iraqis" according to coalition personnel.

154 Matt Lopez, Lt Col, USMC, Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. March 2005).

during this period.<sup>155</sup> These factors contributed to the continued expansion of local tribal-criminal networks, such that most of the available political space at this level had been effectively captured by the elections in 2005.<sup>156</sup>

This process was stimulated in part by the resumption of Iraqi control over government portfolios and the national budget after June 2004. This shift in accountability represented a political opportunity at the street-level in two ways. First, with budgetary authority no longer at the discretion of coalition officials, flexibility at the local-level in terms of resource distribution was dramatically curtailed. The allocation of state assets reflected a new calculus that tended to favor those interests centered in Baghdad over the remote provincial areas. As such, functions ranging from the payment of newly trained security services personnel to the allocation of contracts for infrastructure development were slowed or diverted, diminishing the capacity of the coalition to respond to conflict conditions and impeding the overall reconstruction effort.<sup>157</sup> Second, newly appointed ministers fostered a climate of parochialism by attempting to establish an independent, self-supporting infrastructure within the new institutions under their control. The relationship between the Ministries of Interior and Defense is instructive, as both offices assumed control of an array of smaller “special” units comprised of thousands of supporters and local affiliates, sustained by diverted funds intended for aid and reconstruction.<sup>158</sup> This process is not unique to either ministry, as the institutional reliance on local clientele networks under the CPA and within the interim government was widespread.

The national elections marking the end of this phase represented an indirect constraint on the expansion of street-level groups within Sunni areas, since it indicated that reconstruction and government-building would proceed despite significant Sunni protest and a high degree of violence. The willingness of the remaining sections of the

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<sup>155</sup> Jerry Durrant, Col, USMC, Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. Januray 2005).

<sup>156</sup> Matt Lopez, Lt Col, USMC, Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. March 2005).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid

<sup>158</sup> William Costantini, Lt Col, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. April 2005).

population to participate clearly demonstrated the political limitations of the most powerful armed Sunni groups, although the net effect over the entire period demonstrates a relative increase in the stature of Sunni groups locally. While some resistance groups were pushed below the street level in places like Baghdad, Fallujah, Ramadi, and Samarra, coalition and Iraqi government forces were slow to reestablish sustained presence in these areas and thus unable to recapture this space.

### **3. Phase Three: January 2005-Summer 2005**

The period from the January elections until the projected unveiling of the new Iraqi constitution comprises the third phase. This period has been marked by the continuing effects of earlier stages, in addition to a new set of opportunities defined by elite cleavages within the Iraqi National Assembly, the increased politicization of communal militias, and the uninterrupted expansion of the shadow economy. Changes in the street-level dynamic have so far been consistent with these opportunities for expansion, indicating a first-tier of actors that exhibit a high degree of overlap between entrepreneurial and organized criminal networks, Iraqis harboring some form of vendetta or personal grievance against the coalition, and elements of the former security establishment. A second tier of actors is comprised of foreign and domestic Islamic extremists. Both groups intensified activities in the aftermath of the elections, contributing to the split in elite consensus regarding the relative influence of Sunni representation at the state-level.<sup>159</sup> In this sense, the power-sharing arrangements in the Iraqi National Assembly have encouraged polarization and elite cleavages, so far deflating hopes for the speedy integration of the Sunni minority into the political process. Reports of communally-based militias gaining prominence throughout these proceedings are consistent with the dynamics of street-level expansion described in earlier stages, and will undoubtedly contribute to further local polarization.<sup>160</sup> As such, the prospects of additional Sunni alienation from a political process increasingly dominated at the street-level by the use of armed groups, suggest that a decline in the role of such Sunni groups is unlikely. Notably, reports in early June indicated that the Islamic Army of Iraq and the

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<sup>159</sup> Deborah Amos, "Some Iraqi Insurgents May Be Ready to Negotiate," *NPR's All Things Considered*, 8 June 2005. < <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4694994> >(7/20/2005).

<sup>160</sup> Edward Wong, "Leaders of Iraq Support Militias and Widen Rift," *New York Times*, June 9, 2005 < <http://www.nytimes.com/> > (7/20/2005).

Army of Mujahideen, violent indigenous Islamic extremist groups with substantial local support, have sought entrance into the political process following a move to expand Sunni representation on the constitutional committee.<sup>161</sup> The lukewarm reaction of the Shiite majority to this potential political opening will establish a precedent with profound implications on the likelihood for other Sunni groups to pursue a similar course.

One factor tending to decrease the likelihood that Sunni groups will capitalize on a relative opening of state-level political space in the near term is the draw of economic mobility via the shadow economy. Underground criminal economies represent a political opportunity in and of themselves in this phase of conflict because economic imperatives are playing a larger part in structuring the street-level dynamic. As in earlier stages, demand for weapons, stolen goods, and hostages determine the roles and relationships between street-level actors more so than ideological or political convictions. Yet in this phase, engagement in the black market has not merely enabled sustained street-level activity, but has in many cases become the activity itself, dominating collective resources and driving group expansion in terms of capabilities and reach.<sup>162</sup> This shift is evident in certain portions of al Anbar province, where despite the frequency of anti-coalition targeting, criminal endeavors are now thought to account for the bulk of street-level activity.<sup>163</sup>

During each phase of this conflict, the position of locally-oriented armed groups has been solidified and expanded consistent with the type and timing of the political opportunities available. The most significant of these opportunities have been identified as the slow recognition of security conditions that facilitated the establishment of armed groups and the pervasive negligence on the part of the occupational authorities in the first phase. However, the U.S. role in shaping insurgent behavior at that stage should not be overstated. To suggest that U.S. miscalculations after the invasion “created” the insurgency overestimates the U.S. position, and risks an over-assessment of U.S.

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161 Deborah Amos, “Some Iraqi Insurgents May Be Ready to Negotiate,” *NPR’s All Things Considered*, 8 June 2005. < <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4694994> >(7/20/2005).

162 Robert Looney, “The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq’s Shadow Economy,” (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 1.

163 William Vukovich, LtCol, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. April 2005).

capabilities to directly constrain and limit insurgent actors. Rather, the U.S. role in the first phase might be viewed as that of a catalyst, facilitating and amplifying processes that relate more strongly to the structural conditions resulting from the constraints of the sanctions regime. The assessment of opportunities in the second and third phases indicates an appreciable shift in the street-level dynamic in terms of the relative prominence of certain actors. This transition has favored the position of indigenous actors radicalized through interaction with the coalition, with a high degree of overlap between all groups and the shadow economy in the current phase. State-level political openings may lure some elements of resistance into the political process, but in the present phase, the draw of the shadow economy may be sufficiently strong to keep groups engaged in street-level violence.

#### **D. MOBILIZATION STRUCTURES**

When political opportunities arise, the means and extent to which insurgent groups benefit from them varies. Most street-level groups are not well-positioned to pursue every opening for expansion. The distinctive feature of groups that can effectively capitalize on these opportunities is a capacity for sustained mobilization, which itself is contingent upon the establishment of effective mobilization structures as described in Chapter I. This section examines how insurgent groups are mobilizing and sustaining operations, and focuses on the role of organizational form and the effects of connectivity to the broader environment. The first segment considers the organizational form of the four predominant group-types (not including coalition forces) active in the Sunni insurgency: local tribal groups, traditional criminal organizations (TCOs), indigenous Islamic extremist groups, and violent transnational enterprises (VTEs). While all have adopted some type of networked organization, the specific properties of each organizational form vary and should be considered separately. The latter half of this section examines the importance of external connectivity within the broader mobilization structure, identifying the nature of interactions between insurgents and local populations, state institutions, and other armed groups.

##### **1. Organizational Form**

The predominant organizational forms adopted by insurgent groups exhibit variations of a flat, interconnected, loosely-structured cellular design. With the exception

of VTEs, group structures are based predominantly on locally-oriented associations, either through kinship or communal solidarity. The most effective unit of organization locally is the sub-clan or extended family (*hamoula*) network.<sup>164</sup> According to Khoury, this unit represented a loose form of social organization and reproduction that during the post-colonial period regulated the distribution of scarce resources.<sup>165</sup> In the contemporary context, these resources are generally linked to markets rather than oriented specifically toward territory, as had been the case traditionally.<sup>166</sup> *Hamoula* are lineage based, and united by Khaldoun's principal of 'asabiya, or tribal solidarity. Where *hamoula* networks, both genuine and fictive, are no longer discernable, local groups are associated by common residence and intermarriage.<sup>167</sup> These networks of extended family, communal, and geographic affiliation provide the foundation for many of the units operating at the street level,<sup>168</sup> whether politically-oriented insurgent groups, organized criminal elements, or any of the combinations on the vast continuum of groups comprising "the" Sunni insurgency. In this sense, it is difficult to describe an organizational model of "the" insurgent group, although indigenous Sunni tribal groups responsible for most of the coalition casualties in western Baghdad and al Anbar province exhibit some common characteristics. First, *hamoula* and local associations relate the operational membership in a loosely structured network of cells linked vertically.<sup>169</sup> Cell-size varies greatly, ranging from two to fifty members, and each cell is thought to retain a high degree of autonomy and functional independence.<sup>170</sup> Second, evidence such as the discovery of hundreds of pre-made IED's in the special operations directorate of the Iraqi intelligence service<sup>171</sup> compound during the U.S.-led invasion indicates that

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164 Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues..." 85.

165 Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990), 26.

166 Faleh Jabar, "Sheiks and Ideologues..." 77.

167 Ibid. 85.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid.

170 Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 38.

171 H. J. Poole, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon : Militant Muslim Combat Methods* (Posterity Press, 2004), 131.



*mukhabarat*<sup>172</sup> and Ba'th regime functionaries influenced the initial organization and direction of tribal groups. It is likely that some of these personalities remain influential below the street-level, but reports suggest that tribal and kinship networks have absorbed newly-radicalized Sunnis in increasing numbers.<sup>173</sup>

Similarly, TCOs are one prominent segment of the street-level ecology known with few exceptions to organize according to kinship and family associations. Iraqi TCOs are dominated by a handful of clans and extended families with some cross-border connections, mainly through Syria and Turkey. It is thought that high-level former regime functionaries who were interconnected with these groups during the 1990s now influence or control much of their activity.<sup>174</sup> This will likely contribute to a process of structural change that has been ongoing since the early 1990s, when organized criminal groups throughout the region began to adopt horizontal cell-based compositions.<sup>175</sup> In general terms, TCOs are dominated by a central core consisting of a family head and his immediate allies and kin. This element is distanced from street-level operations by a compartmentalized hub-type network, and the organizations themselves are more oriented toward large-scale operations and wholesaling in regional economies than in the past.<sup>176</sup> TCOs typically subcontract out lucrative street-level distribution operations to local groups that need not be affiliated by lineage, although minor sub-clans tend to dominate these networks.<sup>177</sup>

Incessant fighting between minor groups and sub-clans over distribution rights contributes to the high levels of criminal violence in Iraq presently, although locally-affiliated “crews”<sup>178</sup> of criminal entrepreneurs are likely responsible for a substantial

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<sup>172</sup> Special intelligence or secret police.

<sup>173</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Evolving Insurgency,” (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 36.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Mark Galeotti, “Turkish Organized Crime: Where State, Crime, and Rebellion Conspire,” *Transnational Organized Crime*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1998): 26.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid. 30.

<sup>177</sup> Robert Looney, “The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq’s Shadow Economy,” (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 2.

<sup>178</sup> This term is adapted from criminology. It refers to an ad-hoc collection of thieves, assassins, etc, often confused with organized street gangs.

portion, if not the majority of all violent incidents.<sup>179</sup> It is likely that crews are bound by some degree of extended kinship, as seems to be the case in Iraq generally, although the crew itself is purely a means of entrepreneurial access. In this role, the crew functions as the “for-hire” criminal element of insurgent activities, thought to account for most of the infrastructure damage plaguing the reconstruction effort, as well as the mercenary kidnapping, hijackings, assassinations and other functions of the shadow economy.<sup>180</sup> Crews are also affiliated with TCOs on an ad-hoc, per job basis, performing similar functions. As such, the part-time entrepreneurial engagement of these groups represents a force multiplier for the more politically-oriented resistance elements, contributing to the absence of law and order that legitimizes their existence locally at the expense of the new government. In some cases, the membership of a crew will overlap in whole or in part with resistance elements,<sup>181</sup> a trend that increases in proportion to the expansion of the shadow economy.

Violent Islamic extremist groups, both indigenous and foreign, are less directly involved in the criminal contribution to insurgent aggression than the *hamoula*/locally based groups noted above. Some domestic Islamist groups have maintained a presence within Iraq that predates the U.S. invasion by several years. For instance, Ansar al Islam is the latest manifestation of an overlapping network of extremist groups that has been active in Iraq since at least 2001.<sup>182</sup> These groups are politically motivated, and strike un-Islamic targets in accordance with a radical interpretation of Islam that promotes violent religious struggle. Domestic groups such as Ansar al Islam and the newly formed Army of the Mujahadeen are considered street-level actors in the second and third phase of conflict due to evolving trends in targeting relative to the first phase. In place of striking international-level targets (the UN and Red Crescent bombings) and national-level targets

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179 Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Evolving Insurgency,” (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 36.

180 Robert Looney, “The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq’s Shadow Economy,” (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 2 and Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Evolving Insurgency,” (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 23.

181 Robert Looney, “The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq’s Shadow Economy,” (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 8.

182 Scott Peterson, “The Rise and Fall of Ansar al-Islam,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 16 October 2003. < <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1016/p12s01-woiq.html> > (7/26/2005).

(Kurdish political party headquarters), indigenous Islamic extremist groups are at present oriented locally, targeting police stations, cafes, and local officials with greater frequency. These groups are also thought to recruit and organize according to extended kinship relationships. Notably, Ansar al-Islam numbers approximately one-hundred core members all thought to originate from the same clan in the Kurdish north.<sup>183</sup> Ansar, and other indigenous groups based in al Anbar province are known to have undergone a similar degree of interpenetration with elements of the regime security services infrastructure, at least initially. One possible indication is the discovery of caches of suicide vests and belts produced by the explosives section of the M-14 branch of Iraqi intelligence,<sup>184</sup> a favored tactic of indigenous extremist groups before the recent proliferation of vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED), or car bomb use across the spectrum of actors.

VTEs such as the organization headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, *Jama'at al-Tawhid wal Jihad*, have a more complex and sophisticated profile than other operational groups, due to the range and fluidity of environments and actors that comprise these networks. At the local level, VTEs are smaller in terms of size and self-contained capabilities relative to indigenous groups. However, the effect of VTEs locally is more appropriately measured in terms of mobilization potential versus actual mobilization capacity. Zarqawi's significance and reach are in this sense predominantly a function of local affiliates. For instance, it is known that growing numbers of Zarqawi supporters and volunteers filtered across borders with Jordan and Syria into the mid-Euphrates region through a series of mosques and then into Baghdad or Mosul.<sup>185</sup> This network of supporters is not necessarily controlled by Zarqawi, operating instead with relative independence and autonomy. Zarqawi's ability to connect and manage such a disparate and dispersed range of units is a unique advantage of VTE organizational form within an information-age context.

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<sup>183</sup> H. J. Poole, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon : Militant Muslim Combat Methods* (Posterity Press, 2004),131.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> John F. Burns, "Iraq's Ho Chi Minh Trail," *The New York Times*. 5 June 2005,

<<http://www.nytimes.com> / > (7/20/2005).

The utility of this form for street-level mobilization is partially apparent in Zarqawi's ability to briefly assemble small, local units for larger operations, such as the spring raid on Abu Ghraib prison that employed approximately one hundred Iraqi and foreign irregulars.<sup>186</sup> A more significant component of the VTE network at this level relates to the use of communications and information technologies. Operational units within the Zarqawi network are known to maintain constant communication with units in Syria, the Gulf states, and Afghanistan, relaying updated information on coalition forces and successful tactics.<sup>187</sup> Locally, individuals employ text messaging and multiple cell phones to evade signals interception, and closely monitor satellite media and internet traffic for nearly real time reporting on damage assessment and local feedback in the aftermath of attacks. VTEs and affiliated groups are also particularly adept at manipulating these same tools as a component of their political campaign, such as Zarqawi's tendency to execute hostages in ways that ensure broad media coverage and enhance the political impact of the event.<sup>188</sup>

## **2. External Connectivity**

Organizational attributes are one important determinant of operational sustainability, complimented by the second pillar of street-level mobilization: effective connectivity with the broader environment. The crucial linkages that armed groups must establish and maintain are with the local community, state institutions, and other armed groups. At the community level, connectivity is comprised of a functional association based on a number of "exchange relationships"<sup>189</sup> in which the group and the community provide reciprocal services according to the model described in Chapter I. Insurgent groups operating locally are dependent on the community to provide the requisite political space for development and expansion. In the current phase of conflict, the local community is the primary source of recruitment for indigenous groups, and also represents the communications, surveillance, and information infrastructure necessary for

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186 Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 43.

187 Ibid, 39.

188 Ibid, 43.

189 Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991),

233.

operations against competing groups.<sup>190</sup> At this level, strong community affiliation remains a critical component of the group's defensive capabilities, providing the necessary haven from persistent COIN pressure and legitimizing the group's position.<sup>191</sup> In order to sustain this position, a locally-based insurgent group must adopt a reactive role consistent with popular perceptions of community interests. As such, these groups are unable to pursue long-term political agendas independent of community support,<sup>192</sup> indicating that locally-based groups harbor far less radical ambitions concerning the distribution of power and authority relative to their base of support than is commonly thought. On the other side of this exchange, local groups must satisfy community obligations in order to guarantee support. Broadly speaking, these groups are expected to serve as forums for conflict mediation, establish law and order in the areas within their reach, and provide access to resources.<sup>193</sup>

In the environment of scarcity that characterizes the most active Sunni areas, the availability of resources is partially a function of the level of interpenetration between insurgent groups and the institutions of the state. Reporting indicates that many of the new Iraqi ministries and administrative offices are thoroughly penetrated by those directly or indirectly in support of resistance elements.<sup>194</sup> Because many of these positions are staffed according to extended family networks, almost all levels of administration are accessible to these groups, either through intimidation and coercion or complicity and corruption.<sup>195</sup> This process of intimidation and infiltration is largely responsible for the ineffectiveness of the indigenous law-enforcement and security establishment. For instance, it is widely acknowledged that a substantial portion of the

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190 Ibid, 192 and Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005),

191 Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 199 and Sabrina Tavernise, "Marines See Signs Iraq Rebels Are Battling Foreign Fighters," *New York Times*, June 21, 2005, <<http://www.nytimes.com/>> (7/23/2005).

192 Martin Sanchez Jankowski, *Islands in the Street: Gangs in American Urban Society* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1991), 179.

193 Ibid. 182 and Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues..." 95.

194 Robert Looney, "The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq's Shadow Economy," (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 6.

195 William Costantini, Lt Col, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. April 2005).

hastily recruited police force is active in insurgent violence. Despite this recognition, wages, equipment, and funding intended for infrastructure continues to flow to resistance forces through official channels, and a replicated throughout the administrative structure of the new Iraqi state. Thus, coalition forces and the Iraqi government are essentially subsidizing many aspects of insurgent activity that they seek to control, consistent with the precedent established by the Hussein regime in the latter period of decline.

Interactions between insurgent groups account for the third type of connectivity that determines the effectiveness and extent of group mobilization. These interactions maximize the unique advantages of networked organizational form that have been described in previous sections. The relationships between VTEs, local groups, and TCOs demonstrate this utility. Both VTE's and locally-based groups maintain instrumental relationships with TCOs. VTEs are often in need of laundering large sums of money generated through their own financial support networks, in addition to acquiring munitions and supporting equipment, both areas in which TCOs specialize.<sup>196</sup> VTEs and local groups also rely on TCOs for access to resource and distribution networks in both the legitimate and shadow economies. At present, TCO dominance of the Euphrates routes into Syria are the critical lifeline supplying extremist recruits, logistics, and havens for local groups fighting in al Anbar.<sup>197</sup> In addition, the underground weapons economy ensures that there will be no shortage of armaments in the near term, and highly-advanced weaponry is appearing in greater quantities from abroad.<sup>198</sup> TCOs also dominate the distribution of heavy weapons and artillery looted in the aftermath of the invasion, such as the four-hundred tons of plastic explosives stolen from the al Qaqaa weapons site.<sup>199</sup> The relationships between indigenous armed groups, religiously motivated and otherwise, and VTEs is one element of the Iraq case suggesting a shift at the street-level toward an information-age model of conflict. Links between VTEs and locally-oriented groups follow a similar pattern of expediency and resources exchange

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> John F. Burns, "Iraq's Ho Chi Minh Trail," *The New York Times*. 5 June 2005, <<http://www.nytimes.com> / > (7/20/2005).

<sup>198</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 38.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 19.

analogous to the relationships formed between both groups and TCOs. This tendency has been demonstrated by the discussion of VTE organizational form in the previous section. The essential difference in the case of VTE-local group interaction is that the VTE requires a robust connection to local groups for operational support, while local groups are capable of sustaining operational levels through intermittent or limited exchange with VTEs.

In summary, insurgent groups are unequally suited to capitalize on developing opportunities for expansion. This disparity is primarily a function of group capabilities to mobilize and maintain effective mobilization structures. For groups active at the street-level, the two essential components of mobilization structures relate to the properties of organization form, and levels of connectivity with the broader environment. In terms of organization form, the four types of groups that are responsible for the preponderance of insurgent activity, local tribal groups, traditional criminal organizations, indigenous Islamic extremist groups, and transnational criminal enterprises each exhibit similar tendencies to employ horizontal cell-based networked structures. With the exception of the core leadership of VTEs, each of these groups are organized and recruited according to locally-oriented associations, either through extended family or communal links.

The most significant aspects of how groups establish effective connectivity to the broader environment were also identified. Each group active at the street-level must balance the crucial linkages with the local population, state institutions, and other armed groups. Interactions at the community level are governed by a set of instrumental exchange relationships that fosters a reactive profile among locally-oriented groups. This in part drives insurgent groups to seek greater interpenetration with resource-rich state institutions. Interactions with other armed groups, particularly those that span from the street to the transnational levels, are one important indicator that a shift from industrial to information-age conflict is underway. These interactions are characterized by a similar set of instrumental exchanges that have in part determined the effectiveness and extent of insurgent group mobilization.

#### **E. THE DYNAMICS OF COMPETITION**

Preceding sections have investigated the origins of insurgent groups, the opportunities that led to their prominence, and the manner of mobilization. This section

considers the logic of competition that drives each of these processes and how it is affecting the developing threat environment in the current phase of conflict. The first segment considers the parameters of the competitive dynamic and the role of U.S.-led forces. The second segment examines the effects of competition on the interactions between Sunni insurgent groups and overall levels of insurgent violence. In some ways, the competitive dynamic has subsumed the effects of anti-coalition violence on the process of reconstruction and development, what in official terms constitutes “the insurgency.”<sup>200</sup> As of June 2005, the Baghdad morgue estimated that at least sixty percent of all fatalities resulted from gunshot wounds that were unrelated to the insurgency, due instead to a combination of tribal vendetta, vengeance killing, kidnapping attempts<sup>201</sup> and other related activities.<sup>202</sup> Elements of this dynamic are legacies of the Hussein regime’s attempts to maintain a local-level balance between Sunni tribal groups as described in previous sections. Extreme levels of violence associated with this process were not uncommon. One tribal land dispute beginning in the mid 1990s near Kut escalated into a medium-intensity guerilla war, including the use of heavy artillery between several tribes resulting in nearly 300 fatalities and leaving more than 400 wounded.<sup>203</sup> In addition to incessant conflict between and among local tribal groups, there are significant and recent precedents for the incitement of violence by tribal and clan leaderships against the central control of Saddam Hussein and his clientele, most often a function of tribal vendetta. Notable examples include uprisings among the Jubur within the officer corps, resulting in the bombardment of the presidential palace, and a general uprising by the Dulaim in Ramadi in the mid 1990s.<sup>204</sup> By that time, regional

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200 Eamon Javers, “Spinning Fallujah Why the Marines Say They’re Fighting “anti-Iraqi” Forces,” *Slate Magazine*, 5 May 2004. <<http://slate.msn.com/>> (7/20/2005).

201 Refers to for-profit or mercenary kidnapping, see Ilene R. Prusher, “Kidnapping in Iraq on the Rise,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 September 2003. < <http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0910/p05s02-woiq.html> > (7/25/2005).

202 Anthony H. Cordesman, “Iraq’s Evolving Insurgency,” (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 52.

203 Amatzia Baram, “Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn’s Tribal Policies 1991-1996,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 18.

204 Ibid, 5.



alignments of tribal groups had become firmly entrenched in certain cities,<sup>205</sup> generating institutionalized urban rivalries in Fallujah, Ramadi, Qusaybah, and western Baghdad.

### **1. Parameters of Competition and the Role of Coalition Forces in Phase Three**

Similar forces of competition are pervasive in the present context. Each group active at the street-level, including coalition forces, seeks the same immediate goals of establishing, maintaining, or enlarging their local-level presence at the expense of each remaining group, viewed as potential or actual competitors in terms of capturing markets, local support, prestige, and other resources. In many cases, this calculus has been reinforced by the concept of tribal vendetta. Briefly stated, the traditional model of a vendetta arises after an offense has been perpetrated by a member of group A against any member of group B, and that offense is followed by retaliation from any member of group B against any member of group A. This process of retribution will proceed until compensation and peace has been offered by all members of group A. The dividends of compensation are shared by all of the members of group B.<sup>206</sup> The institution has clearly been modified and used in competitive processes for financial and political benefit, but such events remain perceived by observers as the tribal vendetta of old.

As shown in earlier sections, the tendency of self-protecting mutual assurance groups to assert their presence increases in the absence of weak central authority. One consequence of this trend is that mechanisms for collective security and responsibility such as the tribal vendetta predominate.<sup>207</sup> These mechanisms are activated to resolve the lack of institutional guarantees for community well-being in terms of physical safety and access to resources. This process is solidly linked to the competitive dynamic, and the most visible manifestation of this relationship is the inter-tribal violence attributed to vendetta. The less discernible components of this process are the political and economic considerations that guide violent inter-group exchanges. The forces that initiate and sustain this violence are firmly rooted in the rational assessments of expected gains made by the contending parties. The tribal uprisings among the Jubur and Dulaim mentioned

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<sup>205</sup> Faleh Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues..." 98.

<sup>206</sup> Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990), 109.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

above reflect this rationale. In each case, Saddam Hussein executed a prominent tribal figure implicated in a coup attempt in late 1990.<sup>208</sup> The retributive violence that erupted between members of both tribes and Hussein's Tikriti tribal base exhibited the expected pattern of large-scale tribal vendetta. The prominent role of aggrieved kinsmen in the escalation of this conflict obscures the distinct competitive rationale that bounded much of the inter-tribal violence.

Throughout the 1980s, the growing prominence of the Jubur and Dulaim within the state security apparatus corresponded to an increase in political stature, challenging the privileged status of the Tikriti establishment. The executions of prominent figures from within these rising blocs were calculated to diminish their growing independence from Baghdad. The result was the violent continuation of the same process: the aspiring groups sought greater political, economic, and social benefits from the regime, and the established group sought to deny this encroachment for as long as possible.<sup>209</sup> A similar dynamic informs tribal relationships in the present context. The outward appearance of impulsive, vengeful hostility stems from rivalry based on unequal distribution of resources and influence. In this sense, to observe that a violent dispute is "tribal" recognizes only that a corporate interest of some kind is at stake. The designation by itself does not automatically indicate the likely causes or methods to diminish levels of violence. The inherent risk in categorizing street-level violence as a function of tribal vendetta is that crucial linkages to the competitive dynamic are obscured. A more accurate representation is that the mechanism of tribal vendetta frames the competitive rationale based on political and economic imperatives.

This dynamic is especially visible within the newly recruited Iraqi security forces. In one telling incident, locally recruited and trained Iraqi police were issued ammunition marked in blue ink as an accountability measure. A nearby unit of the Iraqi National Guard, also recruited locally, was issued ammunition marked in red. After a series of nighttime firefights involving insurgent groups and coalition forces, it was observed that

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208 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Husayn's Tribal Policies 1991-1996," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 9, No. 1 (February 1997): 5, 6.

209 Keiko Sakai, "Tribalization as a Tool of State Control in Iraq: Observations on the Army, the Cabinets and the National Assembly." in *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Faleh Jabar and Hosham Dawod (London: Saqi, 2003), 157.

the insurgents were also using ammunition marked in red and blue ink, and that for the most part they had been aiming at each other.<sup>210</sup> In fact, tribal feuding accounts for a large portion of the violence that draws coalition forces into a particular area. This is especially prevalent in al Anbar province, where tribal groups are known to inform against rivals with the intention of precipitating a U.S. response, typically resulting in a raid or realignment of reconstruction assistance.<sup>211</sup> This pattern is known to coalition officials based in the area, however coalition forces are ill-positioned to determine the relevant trends in local competition or to actively exploit tribal cleavages that may diffuse levels of anti-coalition violence.<sup>212</sup>

The role of coalition forces in phase three reflects a limited understanding of the emerging competitive dynamic that is driving events at the street-level. To date, coalition forces have favored decisive and overwhelming cordon-and-search operations intended to clear territory and capture suspected insurgent elements.<sup>213</sup> This emphasis reflects a misrepresentation of the relationship between territory, insurgent groups, local populations, and coalition capabilities. First, in broad terms, the violent groups that comprise the insurgency are effectively de-linked from a reliance on specific territories, and instead rely on resilient markets for resources short of physical havens. Second, coalition forces lack the capability to hold specific territories after they have been cleared of insurgents due to manpower constraints, leading insurgents to inevitably reclaim the streets following the departure of coalition troops. Territory in and of itself is largely inconsequential in this stage of conflict. Lastly, the negative effects of cordon-and-search tactics including indiscriminate detentions and destruction of property have guaranteed the essential havens for insurgent groups that coalition forces seek to deny. <sup>214</sup> Conversely, decisive and discriminate operations, such as those in Hit and Qusaybah in

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<sup>210</sup> Jerry Durrant, Col, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. January 2005).

<sup>211</sup> Matt Lopez, Lt Col, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. March 2005).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Jim Garamone, "Operation Matador Ends, Marines Continue to Monitor Area," *American Forces Press Service*, May 14, 2005 <[http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2005/20050514\\_1084.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2005/20050514_1084.html)> (7/26/2005).

<sup>214</sup> William Vukovich, Lt Col, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. April 2005).

spring 2004, encourage a higher number of community defections in terms of informants and collaborators.<sup>215</sup> The contemporary use of cordon-and-search tactics underscores a tenuous grasp of the mechanisms that coalition forces are confronting. As described in the previous chapter, industrial-age insurgencies have generated very specific parameters concerning the proper role of military force in an urban context, particularly in one of a liberation insurgency as is the case presently. The cordon-and-search has been a famously discredited tactic in such an environment since the failed British COIN efforts during the Palestine Mandate, and current trends indicate that the utility of this tactic has not increased with age.

## **2. The Effects of Competition: Intra-Insurgency Relations and Effects on Violence**

The spring and summer 2005 offensives in Baghdad and al Anbar province have demonstrated how the competitive dynamic is affecting insurgent behavior. Increasingly, coalition forces have entered contested regions to find “red-on-red” or inter-insurgent battles already underway. In some cases, insurgent groups have disengaged from attacks against coalition forces only to engage a separate insurgent group newly-arrived on the battlefield.<sup>216</sup> In other cases, insurgent groups have staged medium-intensity battles while virtually disregarding the presence of coalition troops.<sup>217</sup> Arguably, the influence and reach of the insurgent groups is at its highest point since March 2003, so the high levels of inter-group violence and factionalization visible since the elections in January 2005 may seem incongruous. This segment considers the effects of the competitive dynamic on the interactions between prominent insurgent groups, and examines how this competition has affected the overall level of insurgent violence in the current phase.

The marked deterioration of the relationships between VTEs and local tribal groups based in al Anbar province is the most visible manifestation of the effects of inter-insurgency competition. Hostile exchanges between these groups are generally confined to areas where Sunni insurgent groups are already predominant and target partisans from either side, so the affect on the overall level of violence is minimal. Tensions began to

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Sabrina Tavernise, “Marines See Signs Iraq Rebels Are Battling Foreign Fighters,” *New York Times*, June 21, 2005, < <http://www.nytimes.com/> > (7/23/2005).

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

surface shortly after Zarqawi's reappearance in al Anbar province following his expulsion from Mosul and northern Iraq. At present, it seems unlikely that Zarqawi will be able to maintain a street-level presence in al Anbar for much longer. This is due in part to his organization's preference (as of spring 2005) for indiscriminant attacks targeting large numbers of Iraqi civilians, in addition to becoming entangled in local inter-tribal disputes.<sup>218</sup> The composition of Zarqawi's network is also unclear in terms of ethnic and communal affiliation. It is known that much of this network is comprised of ethnic Kurds and non-Iraqi nationals,<sup>219</sup> potentially a source of friction among the indigenous street-level groups based in al Anbar.

Indications of Zarqawi's declining status within the street-level ecology include the growing frequency of attacks against his network, concentrated in western al Anbar near al Qaim and in Baghdad, and a growing number of mass-executions of Zarqawi supporters, arranged in piles and in public view.<sup>220</sup> In some ways, the encroachment of Zarqawi's network has caused levels of resentment among local Iraqis surpassing that of coalition forces. His group's tendency to confiscate cellular phones and weapons to prevent local subversion, as well as victimizing local residents through violence and theft, indicates a general level of disregard for the indigenous local population.<sup>221</sup> Zarqawi's organization is losing much of the critical local haven required for sustained street-level mobilization. This is demonstrated by the request of multiple tribal leaders based in Ramadi and al Qaim, centers of indigenous resistance, for assistance from U.S. forces in combating Zarqawi's network in May 2005.<sup>222</sup> It seems likely that this trend will continue until Zarqawi's organization can reestablish effective local-level support by abandoning indiscriminate tactics and re-doubling attacks against symbols of occupation, such as Abu Ghraib prison.

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218 Hannah Allam and Mohammed al Dulaimy, "Marine-led Campaign Killed Friends and Foes, Iraqi Leaders Say," *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, 16 May 2005 <<http://www.japantoday.com/>> (6/04/2005).

219 From known cooperation between Zarqawi and Ansar al-Islam, dating from before the war and one of the justifications for the invasion

220 Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," (Working Paper) (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, May 2005) <<http://www.csis.org/pubs.htm>> (July 2005), 18.

221 Sabrina Tavernise, "Marines See Signs Iraq Rebels Are Battling Foreign Fighters," *New York Times*, June 21, 2005, <<http://www.nytimes.com/>> (7/23/2005).

222 Hannah Allam and Mohammed al Dulaimy, "Marine-led Campaign Killed Friends and Foes, Iraqi Leaders Say," *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, 16 May 2005 <<http://www.japantoday.com/>> (6/04/2005).

Competition between VTEs and indigenous Islamic extremist groups is also impacting the behavior of insurgent groups, but in a less observable fashion. This competition has taken the form of a contest for prestige, as Zarqawi's network attempts to reestablish its credibility after having been put to flight in Mosul and western al Anbar province in early 2005. The means of competition, indiscriminate terrorist bombings, has markedly increased levels of violence for those outside of Sunni controlled areas in al Anbar province and western Baghdad. This phase of competition probably began in early 2005. The two prominent indigenous Islamic extremist groups, the Islamic Army of Iraq and the Army of Mujahideen decided immediately following the elections in January 2005 to seek a limited truce with Baghdad in exchange for political participation. As such, it is not unreasonable to suggest that a campaign of high-intensity violence might increase the likelihood of a more favorable bargaining position with the predominantly Shiite government in exchange for a cessation of hostilities. This calculus is behind the dramatic increase in attacks mainly targeting police and government infrastructure in the first weeks after the election.

The second increase in frequency and scale of attacks, in addition to the shift from government targets to high-density civilian areas, indicates the point at which Zarqawi's network began its campaign to match and overtake the efforts of the locally-based groups. Other characteristics of the attacks verify the increased role of VTEs versus indigenous groups. For instance, the use of IEDs and VBIEDs has increased at a continuous rate due to effectiveness. April 2005 witnessed more VBIEDs than all of 2004 combined, followed by an increase in May.<sup>223</sup> VBIEDs account for more than sixty percent of all Iraqi police casualties as of June 2005.<sup>224</sup> Notably, the number of suicide VBIEDs surpassed fifty percent of such attacks for the first time in April 2005. To date, the number of Iraqis involved in suicide operations has been negligible, while it is known that foreign nationals, especially Saudis and Palestinians, have accounted for a large portion of such incidents.<sup>225</sup> The sudden rise of suicide VBIEDs over remotely-detonated

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<sup>223</sup> "Anti-Iraqi Forces Top Five Most Deadly Tactics Techniques and Procedures (TTPS)" (ADCSINT, TRADOC, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) 1 June 2005 <<http://www.leavenworth.army.mil/>> (7/25/2005).

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

VBIEDs suggests that foreign elements are accounting for a larger proportion of this violence now than at the beginning of this campaign. This trend indicates that the escalation is likely due to an internal competition between indigenous and transnational insurgent groups, a potent force driving many aspects of the insurgent dynamic.

In sum, the logic of competition is impacting the behavior of insurgent groups and increasing the overall level of insurgent violence. Competition in the present context is structured by the legacies of Hussein-era resource distribution and reflects the immediate goals of those groups that are active at the street-level: to establish, maintain, and enlarge local-level presence at the expense of other street-level groups. All other groups are viewed as potential or actual competitors in terms of capturing markets, local support, prestige, and other resources. The prevailing form of competition locally also reflects patterns of tribal vendetta, functioning as a mechanism to ensure collective responsibility and security. In the current phase, coalition forces have demonstrated a limited understanding of this emerging dynamic that is driving events at the street level, or of their place within it. These same forces account for the high levels of inter-group violence and factionalization that have been visible since the elections in January of 2005. These cases demonstrate the impact of the competitive dynamic on insurgent behavior, and also suggest that by the end of this phase, the strategic role of U.S. forces may be altered from the current posture of pushing the opposing sides together, to keeping them apart.

## **F. CONCLUSIONS**

To date, significant aspects of the Sunni-led insurgency remain obscure. This chapter has identified several relevant factors regarding the genesis of and interactions between the most active and violent insurgent groups. This analysis specifically considered how and where these armed groups originated, the conditions that have facilitated their expansion, their current roles within the local setting, and how these roles are affecting the degree of Sunni-led violence. The first section of the chapter demonstrated how structural conditions within Iraqi society impact the current setting. The most prominent effect is first, the devolution of state authority to local-level groups that are comprised of genuine or artificially reconstructed tribal associations, and second,

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the competitive calculus between and among local groups based on the distribution of scarce resources. Lastly, the emergence of local groups within a competitive, informal economic space has facilitated the expansion of a vibrant shadow economy. During each phase of this conflict, the position of locally-oriented armed groups has been solidified and expanded in manners consistent with the types and timing of the political opportunities available. The most significant of these opportunities has been identified as the slow reaction to security conditions in the aftermath of the invasion. The assessment of opportunities in later stages indicates that indigenous actors motivated in part by vendetta have gained in prominence, with a high degree of overlap between all violent groups and the shadow economy in the current phase.

The analysis also indicates that insurgent groups are differentially placed to take advantage of developing opportunities for expansion. This disparity is primarily a function of group capabilities to mobilize and maintain effective mobilization structures. It has been shown that the two essential components of mobilization structures for groups active at the street-level relate to the properties of organizational form, and levels of connectivity with the broader environment. In terms of organizational form, each of the group-types exhibited similar tendencies to employ horizontal cell-based networked structures. With the possible exception of the core leadership of VTEs, each is also organized and recruited according to locally-oriented associations, either through extended family or communal ties. The degree of connectivity was shown to depend on the maintenance of links between the local population, state institutions, and other armed groups. The interactions between groups, particularly those that span from the street to the transnational levels, are one important indicator that a transition from industrial to information-age conflict is ongoing.

This analysis suggests that the dynamics of competition have overshadowed the effects of anti-coalition violence in shaping the behavior of insurgent groups in the current stage of conflict. Competition in the present context is structured by the legacies of Hussein-era resource distribution and reflects the immediate goals of those groups that are active at the street-level: to establish, maintain, and enlarge local-level presence at the expense of other street-level groups. Within this competitive framework, all groups are



viewed as potential or actual competitors. This logic is affecting the behavior of insurgent groups and increasing the overall level of insurgent violence in the current stage.

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### **III. RETHINKING URBAN INSURGENCY: THE MODIFIED THIRD-GENERATION GANG MODEL**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

What is driving the Sunni-led insurgency in Iraq? More than two years have passed since the removal of Saddam Hussein, yet there are few indications that the degree of Sunni-led violence will decline. On the contrary, violent activity has increased in frequency and scale over this period, and Pentagon assessments warn of substantially increased conflict continuing with the constitutional process, likely to extend until the spring of 2006.<sup>226</sup> The case study presented in Chapter II demonstrated that the most active insurgent groups are animated by more than a hatred of freedom or a desire to incite general turmoil within Iraq, as some administration officials have asserted.<sup>227</sup> The patterns and underlying dynamics of much of this violence are becoming increasingly discernable: the evolving characteristics of many armed groups are consistent with the 3G2 model. This model suggests that armed groups function within a rationally bounded and organized space that is responsive to inputs affecting the calculus and outcomes of group behavior along certain expected trajectories. These inputs represent potential opportunities to minimize, deflect, or redirect the activities of armed groups if properly exploited, and suggest a domain of likely outcomes for group development.

This chapter considers modifications to the 3G2 concept resulting from the Iraq case study in Chapter II, in addition to assessing the utility of an adapted 3G2 framework to the wider GWOT architecture outside of Iraq for terms of current commitments and potential future engagements. The first section of the chapter establishes an integrated 3G2 framework by synthesizing elements of the existing model with the findings of the Iraq analysis. The second section considers the domain of likely outcomes articulated by this model by examining potential inputs and the effects of expected outcomes. Lastly,

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<sup>226</sup> Serena Parker, "Top US General Warns of Violence in Iraq, Afghanistan as Elections Near," *Voice of America*, 15 July 2005, <<http://author.voanews.com/english/2005-07-14-voa73.cfm>> (7/15/2005).

<sup>227</sup> U.S. President, speech, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People" (Washington, D.C.: September 20, 2001), <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>> (7/15/2005).

this chapter frames the continued relevance of the 3G2 concept in terms of the GWOT threat environment.

## **B. MODIFICATIONS TO THE 3G2 MODEL**

The 3G2 model is unique in its appreciation of the societal-level conditions affecting the development and orientation of armed groups, the political role that these groups embrace over time, and the relationships between groups that span the local, regional, and global levels of interaction. In general terms, the 3G2 concept is consistent with the results of the Iraq case analysis. However, the findings also complement or counter certain critical points insufficiently addressed by the existing model. This section presents the most significant results of the case study in terms of the analytical framework used in Chapter II. The findings of the Iraq case are then integrated into a modified 3G2 framework.

### **1. Structural Conditions**

The model's treatment of structural conditions is consistent with the societal-level forces impacting the growth and orientation of armed groups in Iraq. As suggested by the model, a complex array of associative networks predominates within the context of a state that is constrained by minimal capacity, poor economic performance, and significant social and political disparities. At the local-level, self-protecting solidarity groups are heavily engaged in the informal and criminal economies as the primary source of economic mobility. This position is analogous to the form and functions performed by street-level gangs as the basic element of the 3G2 concept.

### **2. Political Opportunities**

Chapter II identifies certain features of insurgent groups that more clearly define the model. Specifically, I address the significance of political opportunities, the ways in which groups use them to their benefit, and the effects of locally-based political expansion. The case study shows that insurgent and criminal groups have expanded their political positions vis-à-vis the state through corruption and intimidation in accordance with the model. Further, the model posits that 3G2 actors themselves initiate this process for the purpose of establishing lawless areas and criminal enclaves or quasi-states. Yet the findings of the case study indicate that the roles of local groups and the state in this process are reversed. The incremental decline of the capacity and presence of the Iraqi

state, combined with the state-initiated scheme to retain power facilitated the expanded role of local-level groups. Greater political space was not only created across the spectrum of actors, but the state compelled local groups to fill the political and security vacuum produced by institutional retrenchment. In this way, sub-state and local actors were able to capture that political space already abdicated by the state. This is especially true in the aftermath of the US-led invasion, where nearly all of the available political space with the exception of state-level ministerial portfolios had been effectively abandoned to local forces.<sup>228</sup> In this way, the extent of corruption and intimidation exercised by insurgent and criminal groups is a function of state retreat, reversing the logic of the model.

The projected end-state of 3G2 development, the growth and proliferation of lawless criminal enclaves or quasi-states, is thus contingent upon poor state performance in terms of providing essential social, economic and security functions. In areas where localized quasi-state entities do not develop spontaneously, they may be encouraged to do so as a mechanism of rule, as witnessed in Iraq. In both cases, the quasi-state assumes the functions of providing security and access to resources locally. This is especially true of criminal quasi-states, known to favor a certain degree of stability and ever-increasing levels of market access.<sup>229</sup> The competitive dynamic between these quasi-states ensures a status quo balance that preserves the structure of the declining state. The state structure persists not in spite of the proliferation of quasi-states, but precisely as a result of this process.<sup>230</sup> Perhaps counter intuitively, the state itself is prolonged and less vulnerable to capture. This progression challenges the rationale of the model and suggests that these mechanisms have contributed to stability and security in Iraq in the absence of effective national government.

### **3. Mobilization Structures**

The two components of group mobilization structures emphasized by the model are networked organizational form and the interactions between groups at varied levels of

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<sup>228</sup> Lt Col William Costantini, USMC. Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School. (Monterey, California. April 2005).

<sup>229</sup> See Elizabeth Picard, "The Political Economy of Civil War in Lebanon, in Steven Hydeman, ed. *War, Institutions and Social Change in the Middle East*, pp. 292-322.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid

analysis, both crucial properties of actors examined in the Iraq case. The insurgent and criminal groups identified in the case study exhibited some or all of the information-age organizational characteristics discussed in Chapter I, such as complex, dispersed, and technologically-driven cellular networks. As described by the model, this organizational form offers certain advantages in terms of communications, security, and the acquisition of resources that are contributing to the operational sustainability and effectiveness of groups in Iraq. Regarding the second component, the nature of external relationships, the trends discernable in the Iraq case highlight the properties of these interactions and clarify to a greater degree certain critical dynamics described by the model.

First, the relationships between indigenous, locally-based groups and foreign-based VTEs are characterized by a higher degree of violent competition than the 3G2 framework depicts. The ability of groups positioned at the global, regional, and local spheres to establish and maintain connectivity with other groups in other levels remains a crucial determinant of mobilization capacity for actors across the spectrum in Iraq. The specific nature of the relationships between groups merits closer examination. The model posits that locally-oriented groups and transnational groups establish instrumental relationships codetermined by the political and economic ambitions of the respective parties. The underlying assumption is that both groups share an interest in greater market access and diminished state capacity to exercise territorial control within its national boundaries. This identity of interests binds the parties together to form a labor-management relationship. This relationship provides the motive force behind the drive to capture or destroy the structure of the state. The results of the Iraq case verify that locally-based groups are benefiting from exchanges with transnational actors, however the relationships between these groups are far less deterministic than is depicted by the 3G2 framework. It is evident that a certain level of ad hoc confluence of interests does indeed guide the interactions between local and transnational groups, although it is unclear that such limited cooperation approaches the degree of harmony that the model advocates.

Rather, the Iraq case demonstrates that locally-oriented groups seek-out, maintain, and exploit relationships with transnational actors in order to guarantee their own operational sustainability. The relationships between VTE's like Zarqawi's organization

and indigenous Islamist and tribal groups demonstrates a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm on the part of the latter groups to promote the cause of the former. This is true despite evidence of exchange between the groups and the substantial incentives, at least in material terms, for mutual cooperation. The relative capability of each type of group partially clarifies this tendency. Reporting from al Anbar province indicates that groups are more inclined to assess their level of interaction with other actors based on the relative strength of their capabilities versus the perspective partner.<sup>231</sup> While the model correctly assumes that both types of groups receive a clear advantage in capabilities from a closer relationship in absolute terms, local groups have been unlikely to collaborate within frameworks that do not balance or increase their capabilities relative to other groups, regardless of ideological or programmatic affinity or the amount of net gain.<sup>232</sup> This alters the dynamic of interaction described by the model, resulting in the pervasive competition between these two types of groups in particular, rather than interactions based on a confluence of interests as expected.

In addition to relative degrees of capability, variations in capability-type are also affecting the interactions between groups positioned at different levels of analysis. The case study demonstrated that VTEs are more appropriately considered in terms of operational potential, while locally-based groups can be measured by actual operational capacity. Within the networked structure that joins the two groups, the locally-based component is the critical enabler that compels VTEs into the realm of sustained operational capacity from that of mere potential. In the case of Zarqawi's organization, the seemingly inexhaustible supply of foreign volunteers willing to sacrifice themselves and their victims is misleading. Consider the rapid escalation of VBIED use in the months since April 2005. It is indisputable that there is rarely, if ever, such a thing as a ready-made suicide car-bomber. A successful suicide-attack represents the outcome of an organizationally intensive process involving the volunteers (sometimes unwilling) themselves, their handlers, those locating, selecting, and monitoring the appropriate

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231 Hannah Allam, "Marine-led Campaign Killed Friends and Foes, Iraqi Leaders Say," *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, 16 May 2005 < [http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_2005/051705L.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/051705L.shtml) > (5/16/2005).

232 Ibid, and "US Forces End anti-Zarqawi assault," *AFP*, 15 May 2005, <[www.japantoday.com/e/?content=news&id=337292](http://www.japantoday.com/e/?content=news&id=337292)> (5/15/2005).

target, and those producing the explosive device.<sup>233</sup> Additionally, the case study highlighted the complex network of supporters and sympathizers facilitating the transit of volunteers and materiel. In short, this tactic represents a corporate effort that is highly dependant on the local-level indigenous contribution in order to place “bombs on target” effectively. Without the local-level contribution, the VTE is constrained to the realm of potential versus actual capability, drastically reducing the sustainability and impact of VTE operations. While suicide and other VTE-led operations are media-savvy spectacles with substantial propaganda effects, in the balance of armed groups operating in Iraq, the VTE remains peripheral to the real strategic epicenter: locally-based and oriented kinship and solidarity groups. In this sense, the determination to target a VTE such as Zarqawi’s organization to the exclusion of other groups is misplaced.

The Iraq case illuminates a second component of mobilization structure that is only briefly addressed by the model: the impact of group interaction with local populations. It has been shown in Chapter II that all groups seeking to establish or expand their street-level presence must establish effective connectivity with the local population. This is especially true of the locally-based group, and such interaction impacts relationships beyond the local-level in two ways: First, the disposition of the local populace affects the violent posture of locally-based groups relative to other groups. Second, the locally-based armed group maintains a vested interest, through the local population, in preserving the structure of the state. The reactive profile of local Iraqi groups has been described in Chapter II, briefly restated as the tendency to act as a force of social conservation and to violently defend community perceptions of the status quo. The effects of this role contribute to the assessment of relative capabilities described above in establishing group relationships with potential allies and competitors. When a local population exhibits sympathy or indifference to the activities or encroachment of an outside armed group, the potential for competition or collaboration becomes largely a function of capabilities. When outside-group relationships with the community

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233 Yoram Schweitzer, Jaffee Center at Tel Aviv University, Lecture given at Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, California. 17 May 2005).



deteriorate, the affinity ties that remain latent in the absence of conflict<sup>234</sup> are activated, and the locally-based group will adopt a posture of hostility as a matter of course, regardless of the balance of capabilities.

The second effect of this degree of interaction is evident by the interest of locally-based armed groups in preserving state structures. The case study indicated that insurgent groups have skillfully cultivated sympathizers and positioned active members and supporters within local, municipal, and even ministerial-level institutions located in Baghdad and al Anbar province. This degree of infiltration highlights the significance of state-access to local-level mobilization. Locally-based groups tend to maintain some level of connectivity with the state in order to provide access to resources through patronage links, fulfilling one element of the exchange relationship guaranteeing community allegiance. If these links are jeopardized, the ability of the group to sustain its position within the community, and hence maintain mobilization capacity, is also jeopardized. In this way, there is very strong incentive to preserve the state structure in order to guarantee access to state-specific resources such as official employment, distribution of subsidies and revenues, and especially foreign aid.<sup>235</sup> The position of armed groups relative to local populations affects the 3G2 model by more clearly bounding the local-level competitive dynamic and conditioning inter-group interactions, although the model's essential logic remains unchanged.

In sum, the principles of the 3G2 concept are largely consistent with the results of the Iraq case analysis, although some of the limitations of the current framework have been highlighted in the previous sections. The model adequately considers the societal-level conditions affecting group orientation and development, but the mechanisms by which a group achieves political prominence and its relationship to the external environment are more clearly defined. First, declines in state capacity and institutional retrenchment impel local-level criminal and insurgent groups into the political sphere.

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234 Turn of phrase from Khoury, describing the associational links among tribal members and tribal militia in conflict, Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990) 110.

235 Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Protégés, Clients, Cannon Fodder: Civilians in the Calculus of Militias", in *Managing Armed Conflicts in the Twenty-first Century, special review of International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Winter 2001) 113.

Second, the competition accompanying this process ensures that the functions and structures of the state will be preserved, rather than destroyed. Third, relationships between armed groups remain essential components of mobilization capacity, but local groups are the primary enabler and strategic locus, and they seek organizational survival as their primary interest. Lastly, local populations play a role in determining the orientation and extent of the competitive drive that challenges the state. These points reflect the critical junctures for developing an adapted framework that integrates the findings from Chapter II with the existing 3G2 concept.

### **C. INPUTS AND EFFECTS**

How do the modifications suggested by the integrated structural 3G2 model affect the domain of outcomes which the model anticipated? The question is particularly relevant given current developments by insurgent groups in Iraq. The integrated model suggests that first, insurgent-group activity can be viewed as a cumulative effect of the structural forces prevalent in Iraq. The choice to engage in violence is one element of a strategic rationale informed by conditions of scarcity and the functions armed groups perform locally. This rationale also shapes the competitive dynamic that drives political and economic expansion. Second, the behavior of locally-based armed groups can be affected by manipulating societal and local-level factors, the most significant of which are: state-level economic conditions, the openness of the legitimate political sphere, and the externalities of entrepreneurial competition. Finally, these and other inputs into the framework can be expected to generate certain outcomes within a limited domain that defines the likely end-state of group evolution from the street-level. The first part of this section examines those inputs that are likely to generate the most significant reductions of insurgent activity according to the model. The second half considers the inputs already affecting the conflict in Iraq, and presents the domain of likely outcomes for insurgent development.

#### **1. The Modified 3G2 Framework: Inputs to Reduce Insurgent Violence**

Inputs showing the greatest potential to diminish insurgent activity include state-led structural modification, the formation of elite consensus, and the indirect engagement of insurgent groups. State-led structural modification pertains explicitly to the national-level economic setting. As highlighted in Chapters I and II, Iraq's current economic

policies are legacies of the CPA period of rule intended to develop a thriving, free market economy. These policies reflect much of the reform agenda commonly known as the Washington Consensus, emphasizing fiscal discipline, re-prioritization of public expenditures, privatization, trade liberalization, deregulation, foreign direct investment, property rights, and good governance in general.<sup>236</sup> To date, many of these reforms are only partially or haphazardly in place, contributing to the expansion of the vibrant informal and shadow economies at the expense of formal sector development.<sup>237</sup>

Greater emphasis can be placed on limiting the growth of these informal and criminal economies, which are easily captured by combatants. In some cases, the adjustments necessary to address this question may stray from the Washington Consensus agenda, in other cases not. In general terms, structural modifications bear results in the medium-long term. For instance, endemic corruption and stalled foreign-direct investment are reversible, but significant progress in these areas is unlikely in the near-term. However, more flexible, immediate-term responses are possible. The first of these relates to adjusting the system of price controls that are strengthening the shadow economy. For instance, the gasoline and food subsidies currently in place contribute more to thriving black markets that subsidize insurgent violence than to their intended purpose.<sup>238</sup> By replacing these subsidies with cash vouchers, a substantial portion of the shadow economy can be limited, while contributing to formal sector growth.<sup>239</sup> A second course of action immediately available to Iraqi administrators is to re-introduce many of the state-based social services famously attributed to the classic “rentier” state,<sup>240</sup> with emphasis placed on slowing or reversing the impetus to join the informal and shadow economies. These measures would significantly undercut street-level mobilization structures by co-opting the functions of tribal and sub-tribal groups, while diminishing the pull of the shadow economy which fuels insurgent activity.

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<sup>236</sup> Robert Looney, “Iraq’s Informal Economy,” (Arlington, VA: Report for CENTRA Technology, Inc., March 2005), 47.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Gary Sick, “The Coming Crisis in the Persian Gulf,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1998): 195-212.

The forging of elite consensus is the second potential input affecting the model. Consensus within the elite establishment fosters the conditions of political inclusion that will moderate political grievances and diminish insurgent activity. Elite consensus in this sense signifies the basic acknowledgement by the various elite factions that greater Sunni participation in the legitimate political sphere is an inevitability to be reckoned with. As such, the more rapidly violent Sunni groups are engaged and enticed into the legitimate political process, en masse, the earlier their campaign of anti-system violence will subside. Insurgency theory emphasizes that the offer of substantial political incentives in this way accounts for the greatest prospective solution to reducing both “national” and “liberation” insurgent violence in the near-term. Rather than attempting to constrain or deny the ambitions of local armed Sunni groups, the Shiite guardians of the legitimate government can deflect the expanding political power of local level leaders by vigorously absorbing them within the ranks of the developing Iraqi state. This process follows the essential logic of state-led structural modifications, wherein the expanding political power of local-level leaders can be co-opted or redirected by manipulating those constraints highlighted by the model. By forging the requisite elite consensus that expands legitimate political opportunities for Sunni participation, the mobilization structures of insurgent groups can be undercut while simultaneously strengthening the legitimate political establishment in the near-term.

In contrast, the third input suggested by the model, the indirect engagement of insurgent groups, does not alter or balance the conditions that contribute to insurgent activity. Rather, this factor exploits these conditions and their effects in order to diminish the capabilities of armed groups. Indirect engagement refers specifically to modes of confrontation reflective of a law-enforcement, minimum use of force paradigm as in the Italian case described in Chapter I. Insurgent groups are thus engaged “indirectly” through the vigorous use of intelligence, infiltration, and policing. The virtue of the indirect approach is its correspondence to the competitive logic of the model, or more appropriately, to the effects of this competition relative to the insurgent groups themselves. The competitive effects that bear the greatest negative impact to participants are the stresses associated with rivalry and expansion, most significantly by producing internal vulnerabilities. Stress is a result of hostile pressure from competitors and the

rapid pace of entrepreneurial activity. Groups subject to intense pressure from encroaching rivals are known to decentralize, often exacerbating existing fissures between internal rivals and interests.<sup>241</sup> Groups that become stressed and destabilized in this fashion are especially vulnerable to penetration by intelligence forces through collaboration and infiltration.<sup>242</sup>

Armed groups that experience rapid expansion in membership or capabilities also risk this type of infiltration, in addition to a second vulnerability based on consolidating or expanding market presence in the shadow and informal sectors. The black markets based on petrol and food subsidies demonstrate this effect. In order to maximize revenue, profiteers must develop the necessary resource base to respond to dynamic market conditions. This requires the accumulation of materiel assets, such as fuel tankers to distribute stolen petrol, or physical infrastructure such as warehouses to store stockpiles of food. As levels of infrastructure increase in proportion to the requirements of continued economic success, the orientation of group resources turns toward protecting and enhancing these holdings at the expense of operational considerations.<sup>243</sup> The effects of this process are two-fold: First, the dependency of armed groups on physical infrastructure diffuses the advantages of highly adaptable, networked organizational structure. For example, the tendency of gasoline smugglers to employ small flotillas of container ships for transshipment offers an opportunity to physically target and deny resources that undoubtedly contribute to insurgent groups. Second, the accumulation of resources becomes a point of internal contention, as competing interests surface regarding the distribution of collective resources that will best serve the group and its members.<sup>244</sup> Conflict over resources is thus a second destabilizing factor, increasing the vulnerability of the group to infiltration or the collaboration of disaffected elements.

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<sup>241</sup> Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Counter-Gangs* (London: Barrie and Rockliff. 1960), 114.

<sup>242</sup> David Brotherton and Luis Barrios, *The Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 304.

<sup>243</sup> Elizabeth Picard, "The Political Economy of Civil War in Lebanon, in Steven Hydeman, ed. *War, Institutions and Social Change in the Middle East*, 310.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

## **2. Expected Outcomes of Observed Trends**

The preceding section examined those potential inputs that yielded the greatest decline of insurgent capabilities as an outcome of the modified 3G2 framework. Each condition was intended to diminish insurgent potential and manipulate the competitive dynamic to the advantage of the state. In practice, a wide range of inputs is already affecting the progression of events in Iraq, making the assessment of which inputs are likely to produce particular outcomes a complex undertaking. For this reason, the same three indicators (structural conditions, elite consensus, and engagement of insurgent groups) are examined in this section in terms of the results of the Chapter II analysis. The expected outcomes described at the end of this section identify the likely trajectories of insurgent-group evolution.

Having shown in the previous section what measures can positively affect the structural outlook in Iraq, the actual conditions are somewhat less encouraging. Current indications suggest that the informal and shadow sectors will continue to dominate the economic landscape in the near-medium term,<sup>245</sup> and will likely grow as the markets associated with insurgent violence expand. The criminal economies based on theft, weapons trading, mercenary kidnappings, black-market smuggling and arbitrage that have become a cornerstone of insurgent mobilization will continue to operate with very few constraints, and will likely increase in proportion to increasing levels of violence. Armed groups can be expected to prolong and intensify violent competition as long as the prospects of continued access to individual and collective revenues from the shadow economy are guaranteed.<sup>246</sup> Should competition escalate to the extent that the prospects for continued resources are in some way jeopardized, armed groups can be expected to explore options for alliance building or some other means to ensure the future absence of material causes for conflict.<sup>247</sup> In the current phase, competition is actually fueling the expansion of the underground economy in addition to the increased appropriation of

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<sup>245</sup> The Pentagon, Report to Congress: "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq." (Washington, D.C.: 22 July 2005).

<sup>246</sup> Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Economic Agendas in the Lebanese Civil War," *International Journal*, (Winter 2001): 117.

<sup>247</sup> Philip Khoury, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. (University of California Press, 1990) 65.

market segments by combatants.<sup>248</sup> In this sense, the likelihood of street-level competition limiting market access or restricting growth in the near term is minimal. Accordingly, when viewed in the context of the 3G2 model, the structural setting presently observed in Iraq suggests the continuous and unconstrained expansion of insurgent group capabilities well into the future.

Similarly, the degree of elite consensus is not likely to increase until well after the end of the constitutional process, suggesting a low probability that any of the armed Sunni groups will be welcomed into the legitimate political process. In addition, the strength of elite consensus building is increasingly contingent upon levels of insurgent violence,<sup>249</sup> which is expected to escalate dramatically in the coming months. One significant factor limiting the formation of stronger elite consensus is the increasingly vocal unwillingness of Shiite leaders to accept the possibility of establishing dialogue with armed Sunni groups,<sup>250</sup> to say nothing of the prospects of full political participation. In one sense, Shiite political elites have constructed a strategic dead-end in which they are now cornered. By publicly denouncing all those who negotiate with the Sunni insurgent groups, they raise the stakes for their own inevitable negotiation with these groups at the point when their rising political prominence makes entrance into the political sphere unavoidable. This climate of mutual hostility has prolonged and intensified the political stalemate that further impedes the emergence of the necessary political incentives described in the preceding section. Because the degree of factionalization among the elite establishment is rising and few substantial incentives are likely in this phase of conflict, there is little indication that the political role of armed Sunni groups will diminish. Conversely, the output of the model suggests that these factors in combination favor a steady increase in the political prominence of such groups over time.

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248 Robert Looney, "The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq's Shadow Economy," (Working Paper) (Monterey, CA.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 3.

249 Edward Wong, "Sunnis Boycott Panel Drafting Charter for Iraq," *New York Times*, 21 July 2005, < [http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/21/international/middleeast/21iraq.html?](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/21/international/middleeast/21iraq.html?_r=1) >(7/21/2005).

250 John Burns, "If It's Civil War, Do We Know It?" *New York Times*, 24 July 2005, < <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/24/weekinreview/24burns.html?pagewanted=print> > (7/24/2005).

The third condition again considers how the engagement of insurgent groups affects the domain of expected outcomes. The methods of engagement most predominant in Iraq differ fundamentally from those treated by the model in the preceding section. These methods are characterized by the direct military confrontation of insurgent groups through the use of decisive, overwhelming force as described in Chapter II. This is partially due to the belief in many quarters that the insurgency can be “beaten” or “destroyed” through direct, armed confrontation.<sup>251</sup> Insurgency theory supports this view in certain contexts, as in the case of Argentina. Notably, the Argentine case pitted a competent national security apparatus of some 60,000 well-trained and equipped soldiers against less than five thousand insurgents that functioned largely in consolidated blocs.<sup>252</sup> In contrast, the Iraq case situates a skeletal state and an occupying army against tens of thousands of dispersed irregulars, with hundreds of thousands in sympathy or direct material support. While these discrepancies are purely numerical, the qualitative disparities between the current context and the Argentine case are not insubstantial. Other successful cases of direct military confrontation inform current US preferences. Experiences from El Salvador are often highlighted as useful guides for counterinsurgency in Iraq. The Salvadorian model has inspired the recent creation of commando-style units that directly target and engage insurgent groups.<sup>253</sup> These units reportedly number approximately 10,000 Iraqis, and coalition security assessments indicate that further recruitment and the reorientation of some existing units according to this model can be expected.<sup>254</sup>

The direct approach is an attractive counterinsurgency option for strategic planners, as it tends to yield immediate results in the form of overwhelming tactical and operational successes. More relevant to the Iraq case, the direct approach is preferred because in many cases it is the only available option. Despite steady progress in the

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251 U.S. President, speech, “President Addresses Nation, Discusses Iraq, War on Terror” (Fort Bragg, North Carolina.: June 28, 2005), <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050628-7.html>> (7/28/2005).

252 Maria Moyano, *Argentina’s Lost Patrol* (Yale University Press, 1995), 24.

253 Peter Maas, “The Way of the Commandos,” *New York Times Magazine*, May 1 2005, <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F00912FF39550C728CDDAC0894DD404482&incamp=archive:search>> (7/20/2005).

254 The Pentagon, Report to Congress: “Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq.” (Washington, D.C.: 22 July 2005).



recruitment and training of Iraqi police, domestic intelligence and law enforcement capabilities are unequal to the level of proficiency demanded by the model of indirect engagement detailed in the preceding section. The example of petrol smuggling is again useful. Even in cases where intelligence has identified a smuggling operation in progress, police units are generally outmanned, outgunned, and outmaneuvered to such an extent that the prospects of containing these groups through a police-led domestic intelligence approach are minimal.<sup>255</sup>

Unsurprisingly, direct military engagement yields a set of expected outcomes that varies substantially from those favored by the indirect approach. While the intelligence-based paradigm seeks to capitalize on the effects of competition, the use of direct force contributes to the competitive drive that has been shown to increase insurgent capabilities and intensify levels of violence. Within the context of the 3G2 model, the effects of direct engagement by COIN forces are analogous to those of encroachment by any rival street-level contender. Pressure on insurgent groups from sustained violent confrontation yields the stress and destabilization that are positive outcomes when identified and exploited through intelligence. The decentralization that normally corresponds to such periods of high stress favors the emergence of more extreme elements from within the organization. The frequency and scale of bloodshed increases during this period of stress as emerging elements seek to assert their violent credentials.<sup>256</sup> In this way, the model suggests that the relative calm immediately following an armed confrontation between coalition forces and insurgent groups is a misleading indicator of success. Perhaps counter intuitively, the expected outcome of this type of confrontation is a net increase in the level of violence over time. Within the competitive dynamic of the model, escalating levels of violence drive those conditions identified as favoring the relative expansion of insurgent capabilities, such as the expansion of combat economies, decline of elite consensus, and growth of local-level support. In this way, the expected outcome of direct military engagement is the continued expansion of insurgent capabilities and popular support.

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<sup>255</sup> Edward Wong, "In Effort to Secure Borders, Iraqis Are Patrolling a River For Smugglers and Pirates," *New York Times*, 9 July 2005, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F00C14F93F590C7A8CDDAE0894DD404482&incamp=archive:search> > (7/20/2005).

<sup>256</sup> Frank Kitson, *Gangs and Counter-Gangs* (London: Barrie and Rockliff. 1960), 114.

The expected outcomes described in this section indicate a strengthening of insurgent groups in the near-medium term. Certain trajectories of development are also suggested that describe the future roles of insurgent groups relative to the coalition and Iraqi state. First, the tendency of insurgent groups to capture sectors of the growing informal and criminal economies will increase. This, in combination with the growing political stature of armed groups and a liberalizing Iraqi state favors some type of criminal enclavization or quasi-state development in parallel to legitimate state-structures. Second, armed groups will function as the shadow or de facto governments within these enclaves, providing the services and performing the tasks reflective of their local-orientation. Third, the structure of the legitimate Iraqi state will survive and may even thrive in those areas outside of insurgent influence. Fourth, coalition pressure will facilitate and increase the rate of these processes. Lastly, the conditions that can slow or reverse this progression are state-led structural adjustment, the forging of elite consensus, and the indirect engagement of insurgent groups. In short, locally-oriented armed groups can be expected to expand from the street to the sub-national level, evolving from mutually protective solidarity groups into prominent political and economic actors.

#### **D. APPLICABILITY OF THE 3G2 FRAMEWORK IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM**

While Iraq is officially cast as the central front in the U.S.-initiated Global War on Terrorism (GWOT),<sup>257</sup> the military component of this effort has been underway since the fall of 2001 in a variety of capacities around the world. This section considers the utility of the adapted 3G2 framework within the larger GWOT threat environment, and frames the continued relevance of the model to conflicts on the horizon. The first segment examines official assessments of the objectives and end-state of the GWOT campaign with emphasis placed on the role of military operations. The second half considers the applicability of the model in the context of ongoing and potential future GWOT operations.

##### **1. Bounding the GWOT**

Deriving a coherent conceptual model of U.S. strategic posture in the post 9/11 context has become no less complex nearly four years after the fact. Broadly speaking,

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<sup>257</sup> The White House, *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: September 2003), 2.

the available strategic guidance offers a vague formulation of potential threats and the context in which they exist. By examining the variety of official assessments that comprise this guidance, it is possible to construct a representation of the objectives and conditions for victory in this global campaign. The State Department provides the first step in this process, by defining terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”<sup>258</sup> One notes from the above that “terrorism” is described more as a tactic or a concept, and less so as an enemy against which a war can be waged. The *National Security Strategy* released in 2002 notes unequivocally that “the enemy is terrorism,”<sup>259</sup> although follow-on documents such as the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* more narrowly define the opposition as “terrorists and their organizations.”<sup>260</sup>

This same document also presents objectives and conditions for victory in the global campaign. The primary goals are to “stop terrorist attacks against the US, its citizens, its interests, and our friends and allies around the world,”<sup>261</sup> and to create an international environment inhospitable to terrorism. Victory will have been achieved when terrorism has been reduced from a serious global threat to an “unorganized, localized, non-sponsored, [and] rare”<sup>262</sup> occurrence restricted to the sub-state criminal level, although the indicators of this final stage are ill-defined. Other documents, such as the President’s *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism* offer some metrics for identifying the final state of victory, which is achieved by “ridding the world of those who seek to destroy our freedom and way of life.”<sup>263</sup> It can be inferred that victory in these cases means limiting the activities of terrorists groups to an acceptable threshold of violence, which is the interpretation of victory adopted for the remainder of this study.

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258 The State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: April 2004), xii.

259 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: September 2002), 5.

260 The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: February 2003), 15.

261 Ibid, 12.

262 Ibid, 13.

263 The White House, *Progress Report on the Global War on Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: September 2003), 24.

## **2. Structure of the GWOT Threat Environment and the Applicability of the Model**

While the objectives and end-state of the GWOT merit further official scrutiny, the interim strategy for limiting the activities of terrorist groups is comparatively well-defined. The administration has conceptualized the terrorist threat environment as a three-tiered structure comprised of the international, regional, and sub-national levels.<sup>264</sup> Groups at each level are characterized as highly flexible networked actors, attuned to the advantages of information-age technologies. Actors are portrayed as mutually reinforcing groups that support each other through resources and ideological commitment, creating synergistic effects between each level.<sup>265</sup> Locally-oriented groups are characterized as low-threat potential, while the opposite is true of global networks like al Qaida. The strategy developed in response seeks to “compress the scope and capabilities” of terrorist organizations, isolate them regionally, and destroy them at the sub-state level.<sup>266</sup> Although not overtly stated, the implication of the strategy is that international organizations such as al Qaida are the primary focus of this campaign. However, the strategy also emphasizes that the regional and sub-state levels are the favored settings for kinetic operations. This quality reflects the administration’s intent to offensively engage terrorist organizations as far away from U.S. soil as possible, or to “take the fight to the enemy.”<sup>267</sup>

The 3G2 model accounts for the essential conditions that comprise this threat environment. The utility of the 3G2 model as a conceptual tool within the specific context of Iraq has been demonstrated in previous sections. The model retains this applicability within the wider GWOT setting as the basic units of analysis (networked criminal actors) crucial linking mechanisms (markets), logic of interaction (competition), and language of exchange (violence) are not altered by context. The model complements the counter-terrorism strategy’s focus on “identifying, locating, and destroying terrorist

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<sup>264</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: February 2003), 7.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>267</sup> Gerry J. Gilmore, “Bush: ‘We will take the fight to the enemy,’” *American Forces Press Service*, 2 June 2004, < <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123007868> > (7/21/2005).

groups”<sup>268</sup> in their domestic settings by emphasizing local-level enablers as the strategic locus within the complex web of interconnected actors. The significance of the local component is widely recognized in Afghanistan and the Philippines, as commanders endeavor to limit the saliency of insurgent violence within the local population and constrain the activities of locally-based and transnational terrorist enterprises such as Abu Sayyaf and al Qaida.<sup>269</sup> Victory as an output of the 3G2 framework is largely contingent upon the disposition of local-level actors, although this does not obscure the influence of interaction with transnational groups positioned within the broader conflict environment. The utility of the model is due in part to its recognition of these crucial linking mechanisms, in addition to an appreciation of the constraints and vulnerabilities confronting these groups when active at the regional and sub-state levels.

At present, the GWOT remains imprecisely bounded in terms of concrete, measurable objectives and projected end-states. Until such time as this developing strategic posture is more clearly defined, the essential component will remain combating terrorist networks and organizations around the world. Continuation as such is not a matter of speculation, as congressional assessments indicate that a second iteration of this global campaign lurks on the horizon. While Iraq will likely remain the epicenter of GWOT operations into the foreseeable future, the scope of the U.S.-led initiative is broadening to include Central Asia, South East Asia and the Horn of Africa as potential sites of broadened engagement. Terrorist groups at each level of analysis are known to maintain a significant presence in these regions and to enjoy relative freedom of movement in locations such as Indonesia, Yemen, Somalia, and the border regions of the Ferghana Valley. In spite of the variable threat pictures presented by each of these settings, the 3G2 framework may still provide a useful conceptual tool for assessing influential actors, the forces that shape their behavior, and the prospects for victory.

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<sup>268</sup> The White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: February 2003), 15.

<sup>269</sup> Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia, RL32758,” (February 4, 2005), 5-11.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

The patterns and underlying dynamics of the violence confronting U.S. forces in Iraq are becoming more discernable, and the 3G2 model offers a useful analytical tool for assessing the roles and influence of prominent actors within this evolving threat environment. Evidence emerging from Iraq can be used to refine certain aspects of the existing model to better reflect the nature of interactions between armed groups and their prospects for evolution from the street-level. An adapted 3G2 framework incorporates these conditions by recognizing that first, declines in state capacity and institutional retrenchment impel local-level criminal and insurgent groups into the political sphere. Second, the competition accompanying this process ensures that the functions and structures of the state will be preserved, rather than destroyed. Third, relationships between armed groups remain essential components of mobilization capacity, but local groups are the primary enabler and strategic locus, and they seek organizational survival as their primary interest. Lastly, local populations play a role in determining the orientation and extent of the competitive drive that challenges the state.

The implications of this adapted framework for locally-oriented groups are two-fold: First, the choice to engage in violence is one element of a strategic rationale informed by conditions of scarcity and the functions armed groups perform locally. Second, the capabilities of locally-based armed groups can be affected by manipulating societal and local-level factors, the most significant of which are: state-level economic conditions, the openness of the legitimate political sphere, and the effects of competition between rivals. When the results of the Iraq case are considered in this context, the expected outcome is that local groups will expand from the street to the sub-national level, evolving from mutually protective solidarity groups into prominent *de facto* political and economic actors. The fate of Iraq, while significant, represents only a portion of the broader strategic context guiding U.S. efforts. At present, much of this context is unknown or vaguely defined, however it is certain that U.S. forces will be engaging terrorist organizations and networks within this context in the coming years and decades. Strategy dictates that much of this effort will be confined to the regional and sub-state levels, and the 3G2 model is uniquely suited as a tool for the appraisal of these potential engagements.

## IV. CONCLUSION

### A. INTRODUCTION

Despite the proclamations of bureaucrats, there are few indications that the Sunni-led insurgency is in its “last throes.”<sup>270</sup> To the contrary, the degree and intensity of insurgent violence is increasing and this trend is likely to continue. Coalition forces confronting this challenge have been thrust into an environment of great uncertainty. Troops on the ground are facing a variety of threats from across the spectrum of violent actors. The different motivations and relationships between these groups are gradually emerging. Indigenous and transnational actors are establishing links and magnifying their capabilities in ways that are consistent with the rapidly changing information-age environment. The traditional distinctions between violent groups seeking political goals and those pursuing profit are becoming blurred. This ambiguity challenges strategic planners to develop new models for insurgent group behavior and the appropriate role of military force in the contemporary setting.

### B. LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT AND URBAN INSURGENCY IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Historically, insurgencies are more likely to fall short of their stated goals than to succeed.<sup>271</sup> Yet even in cases of successful repression or mediation, insurgency can still pose challenges for governments in enforcing policies. The cases in this study demonstrate the evolving characteristics of insurgency and state response since the immediate aftermath of World War II. Early examples of industrial-age insurgencies in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus highlight the importance of developing long-term political incentives and social reforms, effectively undercutting the ability of insurgent organizers to mobilize recruits and popular support. This proved especially difficult in Cyprus and in other cases where insurgents demanded complete liberation from foreign occupation, and colonial authorities were unwilling to comply. This study has shown that in cases of liberation insurgency, a political ideology that resonates among the population is

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<sup>270</sup> “Iraq Insurgency in ‘Last Throes,’ Cheney Says,” *CNN.com*, 20 June 2005  
< <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/05/30/cheney.iraq> > (7/28/2005).

<sup>271</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies* (London: Routledge, 2001), vii.

unnecessary to capture popular support as long as resentment of foreign presence remains widespread. In these cases, an insurgency may be reduced to an acceptable level of violence and disruption, but without a probability of totally defeating the insurgency.

The cases of Italy and Argentina demonstrate the changing properties of insurgency and state-response in the post-colonial era. In both examples, insurgents waged urban-oriented campaigns against indigenous governments, exploited considerable trans-border connectivity, and enjoyed substantial domestic and international support. The divergent methods of state response that in both cases successfully repressed insurgent violence demonstrate the utility of military and law enforcement approaches in relation to the evolving nature of insurgent behavior. The Italian authorities conducted a national COIN campaign between 1978 and 1982, based on the traditional law-enforcement minimum-force paradigm. Military, intelligence, and administration functions were centralized under a unified command, and the regular military supported law-enforcement as needed. Operations were conducted in accordance with national legislation, with clearly identified structures of authority and oversight.

In contrast, the Argentine government relied on a “war” paradigm that mobilized the national military and security apparatus against entire segments of the country. The Argentine case offers a useful demonstration of the negative social costs of waging this type of COIN campaign. Beginning in 1975 and lasting until 1983, the Argentine government employed special commando units and paramilitary death squads to “disappear”<sup>272</sup> suspected subversives, although the insurgency itself had been effectively neutralized by 1979. Operations were conducted informally or beyond channels of accountability and scrutiny. This institutionalization of extra-legal repression on a national scale engendered profound social and ideological cleavages that remain a persistent and divisive feature of Argentine society more than twenty years later. Both the Argentine and Italian approaches were successful over approximately five years; however it is uncertain whether the long-term social and political costs associated with the war paradigm make this a desirable or feasible option in the contemporary context.

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<sup>272</sup> Maria Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol* (Yale University Press, 1995), 98.



The challenges of the Italian and Argentine cases are magnified by the effects of the information revolution. As this study showed, much of the industrial-age model must be reconceptualized in order to reflect emerging realities of the information-age. Technological advancements are inducing shifts in the organizational form and capabilities of violent groups, as information-age theories of low-intensity conflict demonstrate.. Netwar theory shows that the information revolution favors networked forms of organization and information technologies for the determination of both character and outcome of the conflict. Further, the traits of information-age protagonists differ markedly from their industrial-age counterparts. Their organization is more diffused and dispersed. This shift is evident among emerging violent non-state actors, who exploit advances in communications technology to mobilize and avoid detection. The gradual transition of insurgencies from rural to urban settings compounds the advantages of non-state groups that capitalize on proximity and the accessibility of resources in densely populated areas.

The 3G2 model builds on this foundation by identifying relationships between violent urban-based networked actors. Managing insurgent activity in the contemporary urban battlespace entails recognizing a new type of violent non-state actor: politicized and technologically savvy urban gangs. These groups extend their presence from the street to the national level through information-age capabilities and organizational design. They take advantage of relationships with VTEs to pursue criminal and political objectives that challenge the authority and sovereignty of the state. Gang theory shows how these groups mobilize to sustain operations and how they interact at the local level. Most importantly, gang theory shows that street-level groups occupy a formal role within their local communities; they are not autonomous organizations that exist in isolation. Street-gangs are linked to the environment that sustains them, and this link is strongest with the local population. Gangs are dependent on sustained interaction with the local population, and this relationship partially determines patterns of gang activity.

### **C. LESSONS FROM THE IRAQ CASE FINDINGS**

The case study of the Sunni-led insurgency examines the behavior and development of insurgent groups for patterns that are consistent with the 3G2 model. The case study shows how structural conditions within Iraqi society, the political

opportunities available to armed groups, and the mobilization structures that these groups employ are affecting the current setting. The most prominent structural effect is first, the devolution of state authority to local-level groups that are comprised of reconstructed tribal associations, and second, the competitive calculus between local groups based on the distribution of scarce resources. The emergence of local groups within a competitive, informal economic space has facilitated the expansion of a vibrant shadow economy.

The position of locally-oriented armed groups has been solidified and expanded consistent with the political opportunities available. The delayed response to deteriorating security conditions in the aftermath of the invasion has been identified as the most significant of these opportunities. While the U.S. role in shaping insurgent behavior at that stage should not be overstated, the findings here suggest that the prior period of U.S. enforced sanctions are strongly linked to the structural outcomes contributing to insurgent activity. The devolution of authority and expansion of the shadow economy began during the Iran-Iraq War, due to critical shortages in manpower and resources. The scale of both processes was magnified by the sanctions regime. The formal sector declined and the enforcement capacity of the state became depended on local clients. At the time of the U.S. invasion, the size of the informal and shadow economies and the stature of local-level groups reflected the constraints of the sanctions period. In this sense, it is reasonable to suggest that U.S. policy – the sanctions – shaped the conditions that now benefit the organizers of the insurgency.

I also examined here how a dynamic of street-level competition is affecting inter-group interaction and insurgent violence. Each group that is active locally views all other groups as potential or actual competitors for influence and resources. Each then pursues the identical immediate goals of establishing, maintaining, or enlarging a local-level presence to the detriment of the remaining groups. The most visible manifestation of this calculus arises in the form of the tribal vendetta. Inter-group conflict may adopt the form of revenge-based tribal violence. Just as the traditional notion of a “tribe” was appropriated by the Ba’th regime and re-defined for political ends, the tribal vendetta has been de-linked from its cultural tradition. Inter-tribal violence should not be removed from the current context of market-based rivalry and instead interpreted through a traditionalist lens. Tribal vendetta is firmly rooted in a competitive rationale based on

unequal distribution of resources and interests. By categorizing street-level violence as a function of tribal vendetta, crucial linkages to the competitive dynamic and relevant trends in local political alignment are obscured.

Competition accounts for the high levels of intra-insurgency violence and factionalization that have been visible since the elections in January of 2005. The deterioration of the relationships between VTEs and local tribal groups based in al Anbar province is the most visible manifestation of such intra-insurgency rivalry. Less visibly, competition between VTEs and indigenous Islamic extremist groups is substantially affecting levels of insurgent violence. These events cannot be understood with the framework generally applied to the Iraqi case of a constant tribal and anti-American inspired insurgency. In the case of the former, the heavy-handed encroachment of Zarqawi's network into the heartland of the indigenous resistance has inspired vigorous opposition from local armed groups. The tendency of Zarqawi's supporters to prey on local populations in al Anbar province and western Baghdad has fostered discontent among ordinary Iraqis. Populations are victimized through arbitrary violence and theft, inspiring levels of resentment that in some cases surpasses that of coalition forces. The general disregard for indigenous Iraqis has invited fierce local resistance, and has weakened the position of Zarqawi's organization at the street-level. Violent exchanges between these groups are generally confined to insurgent-controlled areas, thus the effect on the overall level of violence is minimal.

The latter case is primarily a contest for prestige. Indigenous Islamic extremist groups have initiated the dramatic escalation of violence following the January elections, possibly in an effort to secure a more favorable position for negotiation with the new Shiite-dominated government. Zarqawi's network initiated a campaign to match and overtake the efforts of locally-based groups, attempting to reassert its presence in the aftermath of the elections and eviction from northern Iraq. The use of indiscriminate bombings has dramatically increased levels of violence against those outside of Sunni controlled areas in al Anbar province and western Baghdad. These attacks persist despite determined efforts by the coalition and their Iraqi counterparts to pressure armed groups and contain the effects of insurgent violence.

#### **D. MODIFICATIONS TO THE GANG MODEL**

The Sunni-led insurgency poses a challenge for strategic planners because the disposition of armed groups and the effect of coalition operations have been difficult to assess. Yet more patterns and underlying dynamics of insurgent behavior are becoming apparent. In general terms, the evolving characteristics of many armed groups are consistent with the model of development specified by the 3G2 framework. Certain critical elements of the model can be expanded and refined, incorporating the Iraq example. The model adequately considers the societal-level constructs affecting group orientation and development, but the Iraq case more clearly defines the mechanisms by which a group achieves political prominence, and its relationship to the broader conflict environment.

First, declining state capacity and institutional retrenchment pull local-level criminal and insurgent groups into the political sphere. Second, the competition accompanying this process ensures that the functions and structures of the state will be preserved, rather than destroyed. This reverses the logic of the model, by which the appearance and proliferation of armed groups spur a process of state deterioration. The expansion of these groups at the local level indicates that the state is underperforming in the critical areas of social, economic, and security obligations. To identify this process as a threat to the stability and security of the state is only a partial recognition of the larger situation. By considering the effects on the state in isolation, the most reasonable course of action is to rely on enforcement mechanisms to resolve tensions, defending the status quo. This explains the willingness of the Iraqi government to cast insurgent groups as a vital security threat, justifying the current governing arrangement as a bulwark against impending chaos. This tendency obscures the broader relational context that links the state to local populations and the armed groups that they support.

Third, relationships between armed groups remain essential components of mobilization capacity, but local groups are the primary enabler and strategic locus, and they seek organizational survival as their primary interest. Local groups are unlikely to collaborate within frameworks that do not balance or increase their capabilities relative to other groups. Variations in the type of capabilities also determine the character of inter-

group interaction. In fact, effective links with local groups are critical for VTEs to maintain or increase their operational capabilities. Local groups are rooted in the street-level setting, and as such are less dependent on contact with VTEs in their operations. This uneven exchange affects the prospects of cooperation and mutual benefit. The balance of interests must favor the local group, or the basis of interaction tends toward rivalry. This, too, alters the dynamic of interaction described by the model, resulting in a conditional relationship between these two types of groups in particular, rather than interactions based on a natural confluence of interests as expected.

Lastly, local populations play a role in determining the strength and orientation of the competitive drive that challenges the state. The violent posture of locally-based groups is affected by the disposition of the local populace. When a local population is sympathetic or indifferent to the encroachment of an outside group, the degree of interaction depends on relative capabilities as noted above. When outside-group relationships with the local population decline, the balance of capabilities is overshadowed by the reactive profile of the local armed group. Locally-based groups tend to act as a force of social conservation and to violently defend community perceptions of the status quo. Under circumstances where VTE encroachment is perceived as a threat to community interests, rivalry between local armed groups and VTEs is more likely than cooperation, regardless of prospects for mutual gain. Further, locally-based armed groups maintain a vested interest, through the local population, in preserving the structure of the state. This contributes to the imbalance of interests that further conditions the interactions between local groups and VTEs. These characteristics are summarized in Figures 3-5 below.

Figure 3. Third Generation Gang Model vs. Integrated Model

3G2 Model		3G2 Model Integrated With Findings of Iraq Case Study
<b>Effect on state structures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3G2 actor weakens government leading to collapse and eventual state failure</li> <li>• 3G2 actor intends to capture the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakened government and the process of state collapse spawn 3G2 actor</li> <li>• 3G2 actor depends on the state for survival</li> </ul>

<p><b>Effect on Political Climate</b></p> <p><b>Effect on Mobilization Potential</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and proliferation of 3G2 actors erodes state structures</li> <li>• 3G2 actor becomes a highly politicized, destabilizing force</li> <li>• Identity of interest between VTE, TCO and 3G2 actor in diminishing the enforcement capacity of the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and proliferation of 3G2 actors preserves state structures</li> <li>• 3G2 actor is a force of social conservation intent on preserving the status quo</li> <li>• Instrumental interests between self-regarding organizations based on competition</li> </ul>
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Figure 4. Third Generation Gang Model

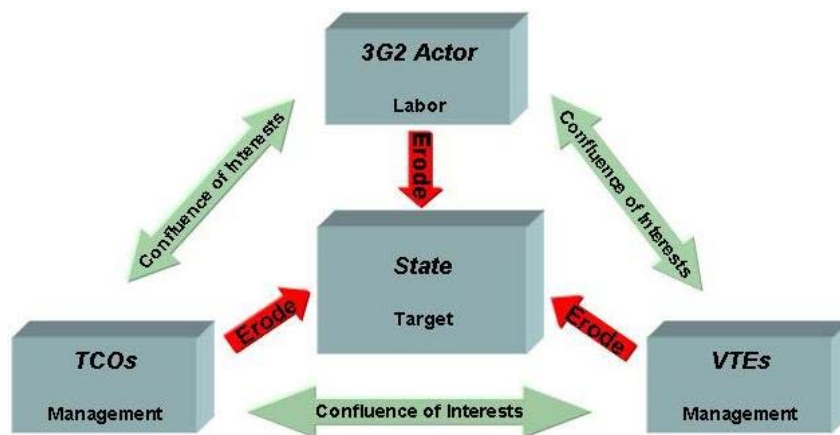
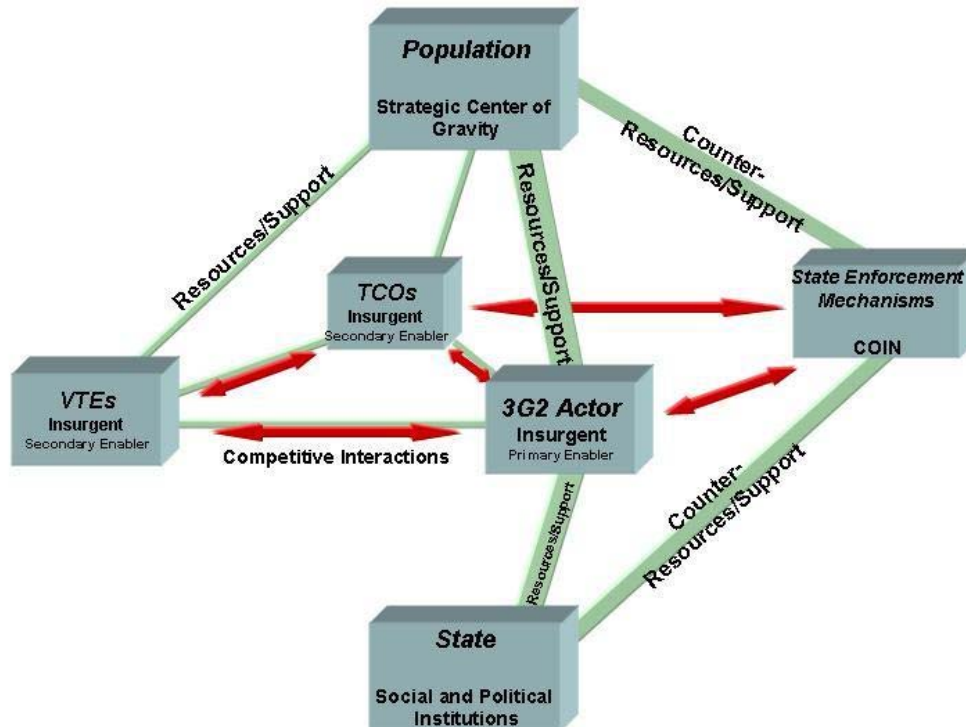


Figure 5. Integrated Third Generation Gang Model



## **E. ASSESSMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

The findings of this thesis support the hypotheses proposed in Chapter I. An adapted version of the 3G2 model is a more useful way to conceptualize the Sunni-led insurgency than the general guidelines currently in use. Those guidelines depict the insurgent threat as a discrete collection of actors motivated by a combination of nihilistic rage, primordial tribal grievances, or a desire to restore of the former grandeur of the Ba'th party. In contrast, the 3G2 model identifies the societal-level conditions affecting the origins, development and orientation of armed groups, the political role that these groups embrace over time, and the relationships between groups that span the local, regional, and global levels of interaction. These factors culminate most forcefully at the street-level, where the relationships between groups are characterized by violence and competition. The integrated model highlights certain critical junctures where these relationships can be altered and exploited to better manage insurgent violence.

The integrated model shows that insurgent-group activity can be viewed as part of the continued effects of the structural forces prevalent in Iraq. The choice to engage in violence is one element of a strategic rationale informed by conditions of scarcity and the functions armed groups perform locally. This rationale also shapes the competitive dynamic that drives the expansion of insurgent groups into the political and economic realms. Therefore, the behavior of locally-based armed groups can be affected by manipulating societal and local-level factors, the most significant of which are state-level economic conditions, the openness of the legitimate political sphere, and the effects of entrepreneurial competition. The capabilities of insurgent groups can be significantly reduced by focused efforts in these key areas. Resolving critical shortages and introducing balanced state-led reforms in the formal sector will slow or reverse the growth of the informal and shadow economies. These measures would significantly undercut street-level mobilization structures by co-opting the functions of tribal and sub-tribal groups, while diminishing the pull of the shadow economy which fuels insurgent activity. Openness at the political level would similarly undercut or co-opt the rising political stature of armed leaders by channeling them into a legitimate political process.

These two measures identify and target vulnerabilities in the mobilization structures of insurgent groups, and the last exploits vulnerabilities from within the groups themselves. These vulnerabilities are produced by the stresses associated with rivalry and expansion. By indirectly engaging armed groups through intelligence and infiltration, the competitive dynamic that is driving violence and rivalry works to the benefit of the state. Expanding groups are particularly vulnerable to this type of enforcement, since their expanding capabilities also entail an increased need for resources such as physical infrastructure. These assets can be identified and exploited by COIN forces. Meanwhile, intra-group conflict over resources increases the group's exposure to infiltration and collaboration with the authorities.

The research in this thesis also supports the second hypothesis from Chapter I. The 3G2 model is a functional representation of the evolving GWOT environment and is a useful conceptual tool for strategic planners. The GWOT remains imprecisely bounded in terms of concrete, measurable objectives and projected end-states. The main objective at this stage is to limit the activities of terrorist groups to an acceptable threshold of violence. The interim strategy for accomplishing this task is comparatively well-defined. It focuses on limiting the capabilities of terrorist groups by constraining their movements and engaging them in their local setting. The model complements this focus by emphasizing local-level enablers as the strategic locus within a complex web of interconnected actors. The utility of the 3G2 model as a conceptual tool within the specific context of Iraq has been clearly demonstrated. The model remains applicable within the wider GWOT setting, as the basic units of analysis (networked criminal actors), crucial linking mechanisms (markets), logic of interaction (competition), and language of exchange (violence) are uniform across contexts. Success in limiting the capabilities of terrorist groups is largely contingent upon the disposition of local-level actors. This does not obscure the influence of interaction with transnational groups positioned within the broader conflict environment, a fact the model recognizes as a linking mechanism. However, the model appreciates the constraints and vulnerabilities confronting such groups when active at the regional and sub-state levels.

I have also shown how these trends in insurgent behavior are likely to affect developments in Iraq. First, the tendency of insurgent groups to capture sectors of the



growing informal and criminal economies will increase. This, in combination with the growing political stature of armed groups and an economically liberalizing Iraqi state favors some type of criminal enclave or quasi-state development parallel to legitimate state-structures. Second, armed groups will function as the shadow or de facto governments within these enclaves, providing services and performing tasks reflecting this local-orientation. Third, the structure of the legitimate Iraqi state will survive and may even thrive in those areas outside of insurgent influence. Fourth, coalition pressure will facilitate and increase the rate of these processes. Lastly, the conditions that can slow or reverse this progression are state-led structural modifications, the forging of elite consensus, and the indirect engagement of insurgent groups. Locally-oriented armed groups can be expected to expand from the street to the sub-national level, evolving from mutually protective solidarity groups into prominent political and economic actors.

## **F. RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this thesis, I have identified a cross section of the most prominent types of violent actors now engaged in Iraq. I have discussed the mechanisms that have propelled them into significance, the relationships that structure their choices, and the likely trajectories for group development over time. Each represents a balance of inputs that can be reconfigured to affect the domain of expected outcomes. The following section considers those inputs most likely to diminish insurgent capabilities, formulated as policy-oriented recommendations.

### **1. Aggressively Target Informal and Criminal Sector Growth**

At present, approximately eighty percent of the Iraqi labor force is engaged informally, accounting for more than sixty-five percent of Iraq's gross national product.<sup>273</sup> The uncertainties of the post-invasion climate in conjunction with the economic stance of the new government are propelling greater numbers of Iraqis into the informal realm. This movement is significant because first, the informal and criminal sectors are easily captured by combatants, providing a resource base for sustained operations. Second, informal sector growth strengthens the relationships between locally-oriented insurgent groups and the population. Informal entrepreneurs rely on local groups

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<sup>273</sup> Robert Looney, "Iraq's Informal Economy," (Arlington, VA: Report for CENTRA Technology, Inc., March 2005), 41.

for protection, mediation in the absence of formal regulatory bodies, and access to critical resources through the criminal sector. These and other functions that armed groups perform locally guarantee the support of local populations. This support is a crucial component of insurgent mobilization capacity.

In order to constrain growth in the criminal sector, critical shortages must be addressed. Criminal economies pose substantial challenges even in societies with advanced, expanding formal sectors. However, the scarcity that drives aspects of the shadow economy in Iraq can be addressed at the level of basic goods and services. Previous sections have demonstrated how the black markets for fuel and food rations are contributing to insurgent activity. Alleviating these and other critical shortfalls will diminish the pull of the criminal economy and, most importantly, resolve the material causes for conflict between local groups.

Informal sector growth can be impeded and eventually reversed by targeted state-led structural modifications. To do this, some aspects of the neo-liberal posture adopted by the Iraqi government must be altered. The drive to promote a stable, healthy free-market economy is in some ways unsuited to the process of reconstruction. Perhaps counter intuitively, the current free-market arrangement is contributing to the strength and resiliency of insurgent actors by consolidating their local position as described above. This tendency is reversible through a measured state-based development program. Under this model, social services and state-initiated development driven by an expanding public sector provide employment and benefits, and strong regulatory institutions decrease uncertainty. The primary impetuses to join the informal sector are diminished, thus constraining informal sector growth in the near term. While this approach may be unsuited to robust, long term economic growth, the near-term potential of thriving combat economies will, if left unaddressed, lead to much worse long-term outcomes than a bloated bureaucracy and inefficient public sector. A focused, state-led program serves the dual purpose of weakening ties between the population and local centers of power and

reestablishing ties to the central state. This approach strikes a critical vulnerability of the insurgent mobilization structure while simultaneously strengthening the formal sector.<sup>274</sup>

## **2. Lower the Barriers for Entry into the Political Process**

There are substantial barriers to entry into the legitimate political sphere that contribute to the perpetuation of insurgent violence. First, the Shiite gatekeepers of the new political establishment are reluctant to initiate negotiations with the predominantly Sunni insurgent groups. Because these groups represent the erstwhile tormentors of the Shiite minority, much of the Shiite elite are unwilling to risk a repeat scenario of Sunni consolidation once in government. The tendency of Sunni Islamic extremist groups to target Shiite civilians and holy sites adds to this climate of reluctance by making it politically difficult for Shiite leaders to appear unsympathetic to their communal support base. Second, if Shiites were inclined to initiate negotiations with insurgent groups, it is unclear that a negotiating partner exists in a position to guarantee compliance with agreements, or even representing an appreciable faction of the disaffected minority. Insurgent groups are widely dispersed and lack central direction, and the fractures and rivalries among the most dominant groups suggest that a coherent, unified movement is not likely to develop under current conditions. The actions of the Islamic Army of Iraq and the Army of the Mujahideen illustrate this tendency. Both groups reportedly initiated contact with the Shiite government in early 2005, but represent only a small portion of the insurgent continuum.

The process of political inclusion is impeded since the Shiite government is unwilling or unable to initiate negotiations. Lacking a mechanism to negotiate with an identifiable source, the prospective negotiating partners must initiate contact in either case. These barriers can be reduced through a system of targeted incentives. Conditional amnesties, equitable power-sharing arrangements, guarantees for petroleum access, and other social and political bargains are necessary to deflate the essential grievances that inspire insurgent recruitment. Incentives are based on the assumption that the Sunni minority will eventually claim its proper share of the legitimate political sphere.

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<sup>274</sup> For a more detailed description of this process, see Robert Looney, "The Viability of Economic Shock Therapy in Iraq," *Challenge*, 47:5 (September-October 2004); Robert Looney, "The Neoliberal Model's Planned Role in Iraq's Economic Transformation," *Middle East Journal* (Autumn, 2003), and Robert Looney, "Postwar Iraq's Financial System," *Middle East Policy*, XII:1 (Spring 2005).

Incentives facilitate this process by offering a stable, institutionalized venue for inclusion in as short a timeframe as possible. The longer this venue is denied, the longer the insurgent campaign of anti-system violence will persist. In the absence of inclusion, the political prominence of local armed groups is expanded. This expansion corresponds to greater mobilization capacity, increasing levels of violence. Escalations in violence result in greater polarization and elite fragmentation, decreasing political inclusion. This cycle is broken when insurgent groups acquire enough political prominence through force of arms to break into the legitimate political sphere. A generous incentives system will lower barriers to entry and facilitate the process of political inclusion in the near-term. In this way, insurgent group mobilization capacity is diminished while simultaneously strengthening the legitimate political establishment.

### **3. Augment Conventional Military Forces with Police-led Domestic Intelligence**

The integrated model developed in this study reveals that coalition forces are actually contributing to levels of violence in Iraq, rather than inhibiting them as intended. Primarily, coalition forces are misreading the competitive dynamic that drives events at the street-level, and this has obscured their role in perpetuating the very conditions they seek to change. By engaging insurgent groups directly, coalition forces are adding momentum to a process of retributive violence. The model of street-level mobilization discussed in this study shows that interaction between groups is guided by a competitive framework. Within this framework, direct armed confrontation equates to encroachment by a rival street-level group. When resources or organizational survival are directly threatened by encroachment, the stakes of competition are raised and the degree of violence increases. Pressure from sustained confrontation yields decentralization and instability that also increase levels of violence. Secondly, the employment of the cordon-and-search as the specific type of confrontation is also counterproductive. Perceptions among indigenous Iraqis of arbitrary detentions, searches, property damage and seizures that accompany the use of this tactic are detrimental to coalition efforts. The effects of negative interactions with the local population outweigh the advantages of rapid, decisive, and overwhelming tactical victories. The strategic goal of denying armed groups critical local havens is impeded.

In general terms, counterinsurgency strategy has tended to “mirror<sup>275</sup>” the qualities of insurgent movements over time. The current use of a conventional military in this unconventional role is unsupported by counterinsurgency strategy, and is contributing to insurgent violence. In order to resolve this tension, the central role of conventional military units in counterforce targeting must be substituted by police-led domestic intelligence capabilities. Small units and Special Forces are then employed in a supporting role, with conventional forces backfilling day-to-day police work where appropriate. This approach corresponds to the competitive dynamic that is shaping insurgent behavior. I have shown in earlier sections how the intelligence/law-enforcement paradigm capitalizes on the local-level competitive process. Through intelligence, infiltration, and policing, COIN forces are well positioned to exploit the vulnerabilities that arise from sustained competition. These capabilities are also needed to disrupt connectivity between insurgent groups, especially across international boundaries. These links are an essential component of insurgent mobilization capacity, and conventional forces are ill-equipped to assess patterns of interaction at this level.

The reliance on conventional capabilities at this stage is in some ways unavoidable, due to the underdeveloped state of indigenous law-enforcement resources. Now is the time to build the domestic intelligence and police infrastructure. The renewed emphasis on diverting resources to the creation of commando-style units is misplaced; these units directly target and engage insurgent groups, thus contributing to the competitive dynamic that will yield an increase in the level of violence. Police-led intelligence efforts benefit from the competitive drive. Through infiltration and collaboration, internal vulnerabilities and links between groups can be compromised, constraining insurgent mobilization capacity.

#### **G. AREAS FOR FURTHER INQUIRY**

The outcomes projected in this study reflect assessments based at least partly on limited or inadequate information. Specific information regarding the internal dynamics of insurgent groups and inter-group relationships is clearly difficult to obtain by second-hand observation. However, important trends are discernable which indicate why these groups continue to draw local recruits, how they gain in political stature, how they are

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<sup>275</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-insurgencies* (London: Routledge, 2001), vii.

organized, and how they mobilize to sustain operations. Further inquiry is warranted to determine relevant trends in insurgent behavior and how to minimize the effects of insurgent violence in a timely and appropriate manner.

Specifically, research is needed to determine how patterns of distribution and scarcity have changed under the Shiite government, and how this has affected the informal and shadow economies. How are the leaders of armed groups translating military power into political authority? How are these structures of authority employed locally, what is the relationship between local armed groups and ethnically mixed populations? Further, how violence has affected the ethnic identities and prospects for coexistence deserves attention. How are emerging trends in ethnic and communal violence affecting the competitive dynamic among Sunni-groups and how do trends in domestic and international support for the insurgent groups, especially VTEs, affect insurgent behavior? More broadly, further inquiry is needed to assess how the Sunni-led insurgency alters official conceptions of U.S. capabilities in the wider GWOT environment. Lastly, the integrated 3G2 model requires further testing in other difficult environments to further refine the relationships and structures affecting insurgent behavior.

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